





Brave Deeds of
Revolutionary Soldiers

UNIFORM WITH THIS

Brave Deeds of
American Sailors

By ROBERT B. DUNCAN

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*Author of "Brave Deeds of American
Sailors"*



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Brave Deeds of Revolutionary Soldiers

CHAPTER I

THE HORNET'S NEST

JEDEDIAH MUNROE lived in stirring times. It is hard, in these days of peace, to understand how exciting they were. The post-season series for the baseball championship, the last football games in the fall, a presidential election, or a strike in the steel mills, are mild affairs compared with what was going on when Jedediah Munroe was a young man. For a long time George III, king of England, had been bullying his ministers and Parliament into passing laws for the government of his subjects in America which the Americans refused to obey, because they were unjust laws, and because the Americans had not been given any voice in their making. George III, being a stubborn and rather stupid king, had stormed and threatened, and sent soldiers to Boston to frighten the Americans into obeying his laws. Already there had been some ugly consequences. Citizens of Boston had destroyed stamps King George had sent over as a trick to make them pay him money; had burned in

effigy an officer appointed by the crown to collect the stamp tax; had thrown into Boston harbor cargoes of taxed tea; had stood firmly defiant against all his devices. One night some years before British soldiers in Boston had fired into a crowd that was baiting them with snowballs and sticks, killing several. Now it was beginning to look like war; there seemed to be no other way out of the difficulty.

Imagine the situation. A few colonies scattered up and down the Atlantic coast of America were actually thinking of going to war against the terrible power of England, the mother country. They were not only ready to do so; they were impatiently waiting for King George to start the trouble. You know how you used to feel when some bigger boy bullied you; stole your marbles; ran off with your hat; broke up your game of ball. You wanted to do something to him that would hurt. You made plans all day long for getting even with him, and lay awake at night thinking about it. That is the way the Americans felt toward their king. They were ready to fight to the death for what they believed to be their rights.

Every little town and hamlet throughout Massachusetts, and neighboring provinces as well, had its band of militia that met each night on the village green for drill under the instruction of some veteran who had fought against the French, twenty odd years before. They were learning how to march and wheel and form and fire their old muskets.

"Minutemen," they were called; they were ready to turn out and fight at a minute's notice. Signals were arranged for calling them together hastily; the firing of muskets, the beating of drums, the tolling of bells. The countryside was a vast nest of hornets needing only a little stirring to bring them out, buzzing and stinging.

You can guess that Jedediah Munroe was properly excited over it all. He was one of the minutemen of Lexington, Massachusetts, and was continually in the thick of the talk. Every traveler that put up at his father's tavern on the Medford road brought late news; and there was never a night, excepting Sunday, or scarcely an hour in the day, when a group was not around the tap-room fire, or lolling around the front door in chairs, discussing the affairs between the colonies and the mother country.

Coming in from drill on an April evening, in the year 1775, with half a dozen comrades, Jedediah Munroe found two strangers holding forth in the tap-room to a group of eager citizens. The young men pressed forward; any man was likely to bring big news.

"It's to be war," one of them was saying. "There is no longer any doubt that the British mean to bring about a clash of arms, and that King George intends to grind us under a heel of iron. It is now only a question of how and when and where they will strike."

"Let them strike!" cried Jedediah, thumping the

floor with the butt of his musket. "They shall find us ready for them."

"Aye, ready enough, I doubt not, young man," returned the other stranger, glancing toward the lad. "But be not too hot for it. It is a weighty matter to take up arms against your king; and we are likely not only to offend God by it, but to bring ourselves to a much worse pass. For what good can we hope to bring out of arousing the king's wrath against us? His armies would swarm over our lands; they would sweep us into the sea, and destroy us."

A dozen voices clamored down the one who had spoken.

"Let him try!" cried one. "He shall find what work he has on his hands."

"You had better pack off to your friend the king before the ball begins, then," sneered another.

"If he does as you say, it will be because there will be not a man, woman or child left alive in the land!" exclaimed a third.

"Except such as yourself," a fourth amended.

"Even so!" exclaimed Jedediah. "'Twould be better to die at once like men than to be slaves to a tyrant, say I!"

"Aye, aye; well said!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Very well," returned the man who had aroused the storm. "Ye will find me as staunch as the best man. I merely preach caution; but if the die be cast, I commit myself to it."

The speech restored him to a measure of favor with his listeners.

"Why say you that it means war, stranger?" asked Innkeeper Munroe, addressing the first of his guests, taking advantage of a lull to distract attention from the other's embarrassment. "What news do you bring?"

"The redcoats in Boston are stirring about each day," the man replied. "They march up and down the town, fully accoutred, to the beat of drums. There is much running to and fro of messengers from General Gage to his officers, and an air of secret expectancy about it all that the patriots of the town take for a sign that something is soon to take place."

"Yesterday they were out over Charlestown Neck, two companies of them," the other stranger went on. "Last week a column passed through Somerville, and was hooted by the boys."

"The lobsters are likely to get more than hoots if they come this way," boasted one of the younger militiamen. The British soldiers were called "lobsters" because of their red coats.

"Not so, lad," reproved Jedediah's father. "We are not to lift a hand against them until they strike the first blow, that you well know."

"And didn't they strike the first blow when they shot down our citizens in Boston?" rejoined the youth.

"Aye, but the time was not then ripe."

"These marching soldiers; for what did they go

out?" asked John Parker, captain of the Lexington militia.

"Why, so that our people might get used to seeing the red-backs about their streets, and so think little of it when they set out about the errand they contemplate."

"What errand is that?" demanded two or three.

"Why," said the traveler, "I had not thought to alarm you with the rumors that are floating about Boston, for they may be but idle; but 'tis said they mean to come this way to lay hands on Samuel Adams and John Hancock, who have been stopping with your minister, Jonas Clark, since Congress adjourned at Cambridge three days ago. King George, it is shrewdly whispered, has ordered them sent to London to be put in the Tower and wait for their trial for treason."

The announcement started a hubbub of excitement, in which nothing could be distinctly heard above the hum of angry voices. Several of the younger militiamen rattled the stocks of their guns against the floor.

"Aye, and while they are about it they are likely to go on to Concord to seize the stores we have been gathering there," the other traveler added.

"Not while there are men and muskets in Lexington will they pass this way!" cried Jedediah.

"Why didn't they lay hands on Adams and Hancock when they were in Boston?" demanded one of the young men.

"Aye; and on Dr. Warren, too, when he spoke in old South Meeting-House on the anniversary of the Boston massacre!"

"Because they were afraid, that is why!" jeered Jedediah.

The elder men let the boasts of the young pass by them. They were more concerned with the import of the news that they had listened to. "What reason have you for thinking that they are coming this way?" asked Mr. Munroe.

"Reason enough, in a way," replied his guest. "John Knox, and Paul Revere, and the others who make it their business to watch what goes on in the city have seen many signs that lead them to expect such a move. They do not let a moment pass without watchfulness; and if you are roused out of your beds some fair night soon by a clatter of hoofs and a shouting you may know that it is Paul Revere come himself to give you warning of what I am telling you."

"It is quite true," said Captain Parker. "I have been told to be prepared. I think we are ready for them," he added, quietly.

"For the whole British army," said the youths.

"So you had better go home and into your beds, lads," Captain Parker went on. "For who knows that it may not be this very night that we shall be called on to strike the first blow for liberty."

At that many brave cries of liberty went up from the party, and a shouting enthusiasm for the prom-

ised event. Presently the elders began to scatter to their homes, leaving the young men to ply the two strangers with further questions, and buzz over what they had been told.

It was well into the night when Jedediah left the few stragglers that still remained in the tap-room, and took himself off to his bed. Big dreams of the things he would do in the war that was about to break filled his mind, until tardy sleep overtook him.

Gradually, as he lay sleeping, a sense of disturbance crept over his consciousness. He was vaguely aware of a confusion of excited voices in the rooms beneath. Men were talking in short, sharp, unfinished sentences.

He lay listening for some moments, trying to remember where he was ; trying to make out distinctly what was going on. Suddenly definite words struck on his ear. "The regulars are coming," he heard some one say.

The regulars are coming ! He knew what that meant. He was awake in an instant, and scrambling into his clothes. Five minutes later he was in the tap-room.

A man whom he had never seen before was leaving by another door as Jedediah entered. His father and one or two others were following the stranger from the room, firing questions at him, scarcely waiting for answers. "When did they leave ?" "Which way are they coming ?" he heard. Jedediah could not catch the replies.

"What is it, father?" asked the boy, when Mr. Munroe returned to the room alone. The others had gone to spread the news.

"The British! They are coming! They crossed the Charles River at ten o'clock last night and took up their march this way."

"How do you know? Who told you?"

"The word has just come from Boston. Hurry! Get your gun, lad. They are like to be here within the hour!" Jedediah looked at the clock; it was past two in the morning.

"Who was here, father?" demanded the boy with rising excitement.

"Revere; Paul Revere! Come, make haste!"

Jedediah needed no urging. Running up-stairs, he snatched up musket, powder-horn, and bullet pouch, dashed down again, and into the road running toward the green. Already the bell in the meeting-house was beginning to ring. Its snarling notes sent a shiver up and down the boy's back.

A shot rang out on the air. The reverberations had hardly died when it was followed by another, at a distance, and another, one after the other, until they faded out in the distance of the night. It was the signal; the alarm of the minutemen.

Hurrying down the road through the dark, Jedediah made his way to Lexington green. Already others had gathered there, and stood in a shadowy group. Each had his musket; some were loading, some were priming, some were adjusting the flints

in their locks. All were preparing to dispute the way with the British.

They were in lively, excited talk when Jedediah joined them, speculating on the probable number of the foe, wondering when they would arrive, discussing rumors that had already sprung up among them, like morning mists from the grass.

"What time is it?" some one asked.

"Two o'clock," another answered.

"They crossed the river at ten. It is twelve miles to Boston. They should be here soon."

"We have sent messengers down the road to look for them," said Captain Parker. "We shall hear presently, without doubt. Remember, you are not to fire until you are fired upon. The redcoats must strike the first blow!"

The group grew. Men and boys came running from all directions, fastening their clothes, dragging their muskets, their powder-horns and bullet pouches rattling at their waists. There was a great clamor of excited talk. The young men were especially noisy, and boastful. It was a striking scene. There were no lights save a patch or two thrown from some window; they moved about in shadow, like ominous ghosts.

A clatter of hoofs on the Boston road, and a messenger rode up. "They must have turned off the road," he announced. "I can't find them anywhere. Nary a trace; hide nor hair; hoof nor head."

Captain Parker took counsel with some of the

older heads. "Go back to your homes, boys," he said, at last. "No use waiting here. We'll keep a watch out. If they come we'll sound the alarm again. Sleep with your muskets handy."

Jedediah returned reluctantly to the tavern and flung himself down on a bench in the tap-room. He was too stirred up to sleep, but lay listening to the talk of three or four who had gathered there to discuss the situation. One ear he held pricked for the first sound of the alarm.

It came at last,—the roll of a drum from the village green. He sprang up and started down the road once more, prickling with excitement.

It was half-past four. A faint hint of coming day lay along the eastern horizon. And such a day it would prove, both for him and humanity! He seemed to feel some premonition as he ran along the road; a sense of exultant sadness; a tincture, perhaps, of the joy a martyr feels when he is about to die that something dearer to him than life may live.

Half-past four, and the village green was filling up again with minutemen. Farmers they were, for the most part, and farmers' lads. Lexington was a mere hamlet; a crossroads. Most of the houses in the village itself were farmhouses, with their fields behind them.

Jedediah had scarcely joined the band, and was sitting against a stone wall, panting to regain his breath, when a horseman rode up trembling with excitement. "They're coming!" he cried. "The

regulars are coming! They're not half a mile down the road!"

"Let them come," said more than one of the farmers. "We have a welcome for them."

"Adams and Hancock; where are they?" asked Jedediah, thinking of the errand of the British troops.

"Gone to Woburn long ago," the other replied. "Revere stopped to give them warning before he raised the town."

"Hancock was all for coming over to lead the militia against the lobster-backs, but the others would have none of it, telling him he was too important a man in these big times to run the risk of being shot down or taken off to the tower."

"Aye, and right they were; right they were," commented another.

"Hush! Here they come!"

The day had lightened imperceptibly as they talked and waited. Now, by its faint dusk, they could see a deep rank of red-coated soldiers swinging up the Boston road, behind the meeting-house. It was not strange that the one who had first seen them had cried out: "Hush!" They were an imposing sight, an awesome sight, coming through the gloom of the April morning. They were enough to cast an awed silence upon a tiny group of farmers and their boys, swinging down upon them in quick, smooth, even step, their arms gleaming, their uniforms spick and span. They looked like a great, threatening machine.

But it was not sight enough to do more than awe them; not enough to frighten them; they did not stir from their places.

"Form in line!" said Captain Parker, quietly. "Do not fire unless they fire," he repeated, adding, "And if any man runs I will shoot him down like a dog!" No one minded his saying that, for no one intended to run.

"Whacky, but there are a lot of them!" exclaimed Jedediah, staring at the advancing column. Rank after rank was wheeling into sight along the road.

An officer rode in front; it was Major Pitcairn. The men of Lexington heard him give an order, and saw the column divide, part of it coming on along the road, and part swinging in behind the meeting-house. With steady step they came on and on, meeting again on the green, and spreading into a long line. The thirty or forty militiamen, straggling in a thin rank along the edge of the green confronting the splendid soldiery of England, would have made a comic sight, if it had not been one of the most dramatic the world had ever seen.

Major Pitcairn rode forward. "Disperse, curse ye! Why don't ye disperse, ye rebels?" he shouted.

Silence along the thin, grim rank of farmers.

The British officer turned to his troops. "Fire!" he cried.

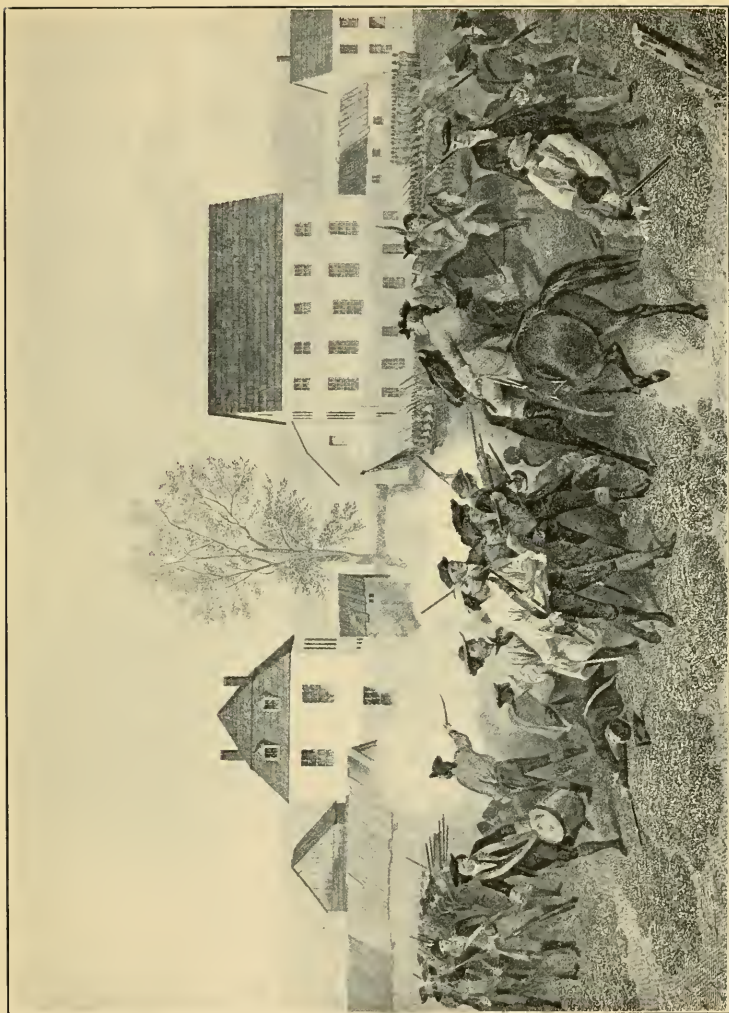
They would not fire. It was no little thing to shoot down men in cold blood, especially when

those men were brothers against whom they had no war. The call of race was strong ; these farmers, in the eyes of the British soldiers, were Englishmen.

The man on the horse stiffened in his saddle ; his eyes flashed. "Fire!" he cried again. He pulled his pistols from their holsters, took a snap aim at the farmers, twenty paces away from him on the edge of the green, and pulled triggers. Two tiny spouts of flame leaped from the pistols' muzzles ; two little flashes of fire that were destined to start a mighty conflagration whose flames would weld thirteen straggling colonies into a mighty nation.

The sound of the pistol shots was still in the air when a sputtering fire ran along the ranks of the British soldiers, followed by a solid volley. At the discharge of the first gun Jedediah Munroe glanced swiftly from side to side among his fellows to see what harm had been done. He was watching one of his comrades, who had been hit, writhing on the ground, and wondering pitifully at the sight of a well man stricken down, when a hot flash of pain ran through his shoulder. He was staggered under the impact of a blow that had been so quick and abrupt that he had been scarcely aware of it. The next instant he was on his knees, staring at the ground, steadying his brain.

A shot rang out close to his ear. Another, and another. His companions were returning the fire. The noise drove home a consciousness of what it all meant. Struggling to his feet, he picked up his



THE TIME HAD COME FOR PATRIOTS TO FIGHT



musket, which had fallen, leveled it, and pulled the trigger.

There was no response from the gun. The powder had been spilled from the firing-pan. With steady hand and cool head he poured out some more, adjusted the flint in the lock, took steady aim, and fired. He did not feel the jump of the musket butt against his cheek ; he did not feel the great burning hurt that ran through and through his shoulder. He only knew that the redcoats had fired upon the Americans, and that the time had come when patriots might fight for what they held dear.

The fire back and forth was brisk. In the midst of the rattle the boy heard the voice of Captain John Parker, calm and firm. "Disperse," he ordered. "There is no use in sacrificing ourselves ; they are too many for us."

Men at Jedediah's side began to fall back ; the ranks were dissolving. Stopping for one last shot, Jedediah backed away from the foe, reluctantly, shouting defiance. He saw a dozen of his friends and comrades lying on the ground where the minutemen had stood as he backed away. His heart burned with rage and hate against their slayers. One or two of the British had sunk to the ground ; he rejoiced in that, and wondered whether his bullets had found a mark.

The redcoats came on with a rush when the American ranks broke. Jedediah turned and ran for a stone wall fifty yards from the green. He ran be-

cause he wanted to keep out of the enemy's hands, so that he might fight again. There was no thought of fear in his action.

Glancing over his shoulder as he crossed the field near the stone wall, he saw some one kneeling on the green leveling his musket at the British. Between the man's knees was a hat filled with cartridges. It was Jonas Parker. Jonas had sworn that he would never run from the regulars, and was making good his boast. Even as Jedediah looked two infantrymen ran up to the kneeling man and plunged their bayonets into him, thrusting him savagely to the ground, where he kicked and lay still. In his heart Jedediah wished that he were Jonas Parker; but his own time was fast approaching.

When the half-back on your team, bowled over in a scrimmage, picks himself up from the dirt and staggers into his place behind the line, you know how it makes you feel. You know how your heart gets big under your overcoat, and something clutches you at the throat to see him go back into the game, at the risk of another hurt, for the honor and glory of his school. How much more would you feel if your comrade arose bleeding from a bullet blow that had laid him in the dust, and returned to a fray where death lurked in every noisy instant!

That is what Jedediah Munroe did. He had scarcely gained the shelter of the stone wall when weakness seized him, and he sank to the ground. The bullet wound was a growing hurt. It throbbed and burned;

a hot lameness spread through his shoulder and neck, and down his arm. He grew sick and faint with the suffering.

He sat on the ground, leaning against the wall, gasping, sobbing. Now and then a bullet would spat against the stones, or whistle above him. He gritted his teeth and set his will to conquer the sickness that assailed him. The hand that he unconsciously pressed against the bullet hole came away sopping with blood. For a moment he stared at it. Then he tore off his neckerchief, made a wad of it, pressed it against the wound, and bound it there as well as he could, using the cord of his powder-flask. The flask he put into his pocket.

He had barely finished doing this when he saw two British soldiers vault over the wall a hundred feet away, and look about them. Catching sight of him, they raised their guns and fired. One bullet kicked up the dust a foot from the boy's knee; the other sent his hat spinning in the air. Without waiting to pick it up Jedediah started to his feet and ran along the wall away from the soldiers, crouching low to avoid exposing his head to the redcoats still in the green, of whom he caught glimpses between the top stones as he ran.

Finding that the others did not follow, Jedediah crept around the corner of an outhouse, which he entered by the back door. He crawled into a stall to wait. For ten minutes he lay there before he ventured to look out again. When he thrust his head

around the edge of the building he saw the first files of the British marching off the green in the direction of Concord, and saw another column approaching from the Boston road.

It seemed to him, looking at them, that the entire British army had come that way. He had never seen so many soldiers at once in his whole life. Their dust could be seen away down the Boston road. He watched them in fascinated admiration, forgetting his wound for a moment, and his hate.

The second column, which was Colonel Smith's command, and the main body of the force, halted for a short time on the green while Smith and Pitcairn refreshed themselves at Buckman's tavern, and then followed the advance into the Concord road. They had not passed out of sight when Jedediah Munroe, picking up his musket, went skirting through the field on their flanks. Such a matter as a bullet wound, more or less, was not going to keep him out of the fight. He had a score to pay, he had; a long score, partly his own, and partly that of his countrymen, who had suffered enough from a British tyrant.

His wound hurt him; he could not make good time. Now and then he was obliged to stop and rest. The rumble of the column moving along the Concord road grew fainter and fainter. But Jedediah did not care. They must come back that way, those redcoats, and he would have one good shot at

them,—if he lived long enough. His wound was hurting him bitterly.

He was suddenly aware that two men were walking beside him; that he was talking with them. They were two of the militiamen. He remembered then that they had been in the outhouse where he had hid; that they had come away with him, and been with him since he started. He had been too excited to notice them particularly. They were urging him to go home; to leave the rest to others. They made him angry. He told them to tend to their own affairs; that he was going to kill some of those redcoats if it did cost him his life. He wasn't very agreeable about it, but they were rather pleased with his spirit, nevertheless.

As the three trudged along they fell in with others following the British. Some of them had been on the green earlier. Some of them had just come up from farms close by. Some of them lived over Woburn way. Three lads had come all the way from Woburn, having been alarmed by a messenger sent out by Captain Parker when Revere brought the first word to Lexington.

Mile by mile the number grew. The little group that had begun with three was no longer a distinct party. A straggling procession of grim farmers and their lads dotted the long road. Each moment the number was increased. And always the newcomers had arrived from greater and greater distances. The hornets were beginning to buzz. The hive had been stirred.

It was broad morning now. The sun shone warm from a clear sky ; unusually warm, for April. Birds were singing in the trees ; cattle looked up from their browsing in pastures to stare stupidly at the rout of men streaming along the road, usually so quiet. They did not know what to make of it, apparently. Already they had been sufficiently astonished to see more men than an average cow had ever dreamed of go walking by in red coats. Now the roads were filled again with men. Undoubtedly the cows wondered that the world contained so many men.

Jedediah Munroe could not keep up. The stream of men, hastening toward Concord in the wake of the British, brushed past him. More and more often he was obliged to sit down by the side of the road. His wound hurt him bitterly ; his whole shoulder was afire with the pain of it. The bandage kept slipping ; he made it the excuse for resting.

Once when he was sitting on a stone near a farmhouse a little girl came out and helped him fix his bandage. She was full of pity for him. She told him that her father had stayed home to watch the house, but that two of her brothers had gone to Concord. When he was ready to march again, the girl brought Jedediah a bowl of milk and some bread. He realized then that he had been without food since the night before. The little bite revived him ; he stalked off with a stronger step, determined that the girl should not see him stagger. She was

shading her eyes watching him when he passed a turn in the road.

He picked up a bit of gossip now and then. Paul Revere had been captured before reaching Concord by British officers who had ridden out the previous evening to watch the road. So had Ebenezer Dawes, another messenger from Boston. But Dr. Prescott, who lived in Lexington, and who had accompanied the two on their way toward Concord, had escaped and got into Concord with word of the regulars' approach. The town had turned out, and the countryside. Most of the stores had been hidden or buried or carted out of the way by daylight; probably all would be saved, was the word that came back along the line of farmers.

Glancing ahead down the road as he tottered along, Jedediah caught sight of smoke lifting in sluggish column in the direction of Concord. The British were burning the town! Another score for him to pay before the gnawing wound in his shoulder bit too deep! He quickened his steps impulsively.

The sound of a shot came to his ears from a great distance. His nerves tingled; he felt like a hunter approaching game. The sound was followed by another; by several; by the crash of a volley, and silence. He hurried on.

The smoke from the fire grew thicker and higher. Presently, coming within distant sight of the town, the young minuteman saw that it was the court-house

that was burning. Farther away was another fire in a barn-yard.

Fifteen minutes later, climbing the crest of a hill, he looked down into the village. The British were drawn up on the green. They had cut down the liberty pole. Squads of them could be seen moving from house to house, in search of the stores they had come to seize or destroy. At the sight of them Jedediah forgot his wound again ; forgot his fatigue and his sick faintness. He thought only of the score he had to pay, and set out to pay it.

Making a wide *détour*, he fell in presently with some minutemen who had come all the way from Lincoln. They had been there before the British, and told him what had happened. The redcoats, they said, had ruined a few of the stores that had not been carted off to safety. There had been a fight at the bridge, in which several on both sides had been killed. The whole country was swarming with minutemen, they said ; if the redcoats did not start back for Boston pretty soon they would find it hard to get there at all. The Lincoln men had high hopes of capturing the entire British detachment before the day ended.

The British officers in command of the expedition apparently had a like view of the situation, and were not so pleased with it. Jedediah watched them sending recalls to the squads, and watched them reform their men on the green before the court-house, preparing to march. Presently, with a roll of drums

and the squeal of fifes, they set out, entering the road toward Lexington again.

Now the time had come. Crawling to his feet, the boy shouldered his musket and swung off with the Lincoln men to join a large body of militia that was hurrying across the fields toward the Bedford road. The Bedford road came into the Lexington and Concord road at Merriam's Corners, a mile and a half from town. If the militia could reach the point first, they could punish the British column severely as they passed.

Jedediah found it heavy work keeping up with the others. Only an eagerness to settle the score made it possible for the wounded man to stay in the ranks at all. A dozen of his comrades urged him to drop out; some of them insisted, almost threatening him if he did not give up, but he answered them brusquely and kept on.

His legs were like lead; his neck was like a rag; his head reeled dizzily. Every breath ran bunches of white-hot blades through and through the top of his lung; the biting soreness from his wound was creeping, creeping across his body. He could scarcely move his arm.

He was beginning to think that the end had come, and that he would be obliged to give up, when some one shouted that the regulars were coming. Following the gaze of the others, he saw a band come swinging off a ridge paralleling the Concord road, and making for the Bedford road ahead of the militia.

A tension passed through the militiamen. They saw that there was going to be a clash, and braced themselves for it. Jedediah, experiencing a wild sort of glee, loaded his musket, primed it with great care, saw to his flint, and waited.

The British were making for a bridge that crossed a little brook. It was a flanking party; they must cross that bridge to get to the main body coming along the Concord road. The main body was in sight now, raising a great cloud of dust a quarter of a mile away. Some of the militiamen were for seizing the bridge. Others, seeing that they would then be exposed to an attack in the rear by the main column, counseled taking a position behind the stone wall at the side of the road. They did so, and stood there in silent, grim determination, watching the red lines draw through the field toward them.

Straight to the bridge marched the British. Arriving there, they wheeled, aimed, and fired a volley. It went singing over the heads of the minutemen; it was nothing to the humming sting of the hornets that were about to be loosed on the king's regulars.

A shot from behind the wall! A British soldier, flinging his gun into the air, staggered three steps and fell, grasping with both hands at his throat. Jedediah Munroe, his eyes lighted by the flame of battle lust, was taking down his musket from its rest among the stones and preparing to reload it. He had made one mark against the score he had to settle.

A dozen shots rattled from the wall ; a score, fifty. Another regular, and another, faded out of the ranks. The detachment, without stopping to reload and fire again, moved off briskly toward the Concord road, glad enough to get to the protection of the main force.

It was the beginning of a tragedy. The hornets had begun to sting. From that moment the retreating British were beset with foes that clung on their flanks, sinking their stings into the quivering ranks. They had stirred the nest too well.

Jedediah, with a shout, leaped over the wall and raced toward a wood ahead of the British through which they must pass on the road. His musket was loaded and ready again. He reached the wood, stepped behind a tree, poked out his musket, and waited. The ranks of red came in sight among the stems of trees, stepping briskly. He could see the soldiers looking this way and that. Their faces were unhappy, anxious. They were alarmed. Now and then one stopped to fire at a glimpse of a man in homespun hiding behind some tree-trunk.

Every trunk hid its hornet. Jedediah, taking careful aim at a man on the edge of the nearest file, let go his piece with a right good will, and leaped away, dodging from tree to tree until he had put a distance between the column and himself. Loading swiftly, he set out again to intercept the column once more. He was like a boy at a game ; eager, excited, joyous. He cared not for the thick throb in his shoulder ; for

the numbness that was creeping over him ; that had already risen to his head, turning it light and dizzy. He was full of the zest of the game, and ran ahead for more of it.

How many times that morning the boy delivered his sting from behind some tree-trunk, or stone wall, or outhouse, cannot be told. There was no one there to count. But for two hours he followed, just as a horse-fly follows a horse, lighting now to sting ; taking flight, and lighting again.

The condition of the regulars was becoming desperate. They were beginning to tire. They had had no sleep ; they had marched eighteen miles from Boston since the night before ; they had had little food. They had been doing heavy work in Concord ; and now their hands were full of heavier. And the day was piping hot.

At every turn of the road, they were met by the persistent foe. Every rise in the ground, every cluster of trees, every stretch of stone wall, swarmed with the maddened hornets. Fresh swarms of them, coming from distant towns, stirred by the stick, rushed out upon the struggling Englishmen. There was no refuge from their stings.

They sent out flanking parties to clear the sides of the road. The flanking parties found no solid foe ; only a fluid line of hidden enemies that drew away, only to close up again upon them when they returned to the main force in the road.

The firing was incessant, from all directions. It

was maddening. There was no way of striking back, because there was nothing to strike at ; no organization, no formation. Only farmers and their lads scampering from tree to rock, from rock to tree, with their deadly muskets ready to sting again and again, from each rock and tree.

The regulars, schooled in war, and as brave as any soldiers, could not stand it. They were in no mood for fighting, but there was no choice. They must fight, or die. Some of them preferred to die, and sat down by the side of the road, expecting some yeoman to come up and despatch them.

They crowded in the road like sheep, each trying to bury himself in the center of the column, where he would be protected from the galling fire. Officers were powerless to control them. Faster and faster they hurried along the hot, dusty road, a disorganized mob. They did not try to fight back ; they only tried to get out of the way. And always, without giving a moment's rest, the militiamen kept up their nagging fire, bullet by bullet, minute by minute.

Jedediah Munroe trudged doggedly on their flanks like a pursuing ghost. Very like a ghost he was ; grim, gray, silent. He was in a trance of weakness and pain ; firing, loading, running ahead, and firing again had become a habit. He did it all mechanically, without thinking. The world was a great whirling disk to his senses, with a splotch of red in its center, —and another splotch on the shoulder of his coat.

The splotch in the center was growing smaller ; that on his coat was increasing.

Fatigue seized him now and then, compelling him to sit down and rest. Sometimes he fell in his tracks and lay until strength enough returned to enable him to stagger forward again. It seemed to him that all his life had been filled with this experience of firing into the central splotch of red ; of stopping to rest, and staggering forward once more. He had no other recollection.

This sense was so strong on him that presently, when something dimly familiar in the scene aroused his consciousness, he was puzzled to know what it was, and where he had seen it before. Then he realized that he was back in Lexington again.

He saw the meeting-house ; Buckman's tavern on the green ; recognized the plat of level ground where he had learned soldiering with his neighbors and comrades. He stood staring at it, supporting himself with his musket.

Something was happening ; he could not make out what it was. The straggling patch of red in the center of the whirling world had become strangely steady and regular. It was a great hollow square now, with sides of red-coated men. But in the middle of the square was the same red splotch that he had been following so mercilessly since—since time began.

Gradually, as he looked, he saw other lines forming outside the central square, at a distance. Sombre,

dull-colored lines they were, composed of men in workaday dress. He knew at last that they were the yeomen of the countryside called out by the alarm to fight for their country ; that they were the hornets whose nest had been stirred by the British stick.

"Curse 'em !" he heard some one say, at his elbow.

"Curse who ?" he demanded, hotly.

"The British. They've come from Boston ; and just in time, too ! Half an hour more and we'd have bagged the whole lot of 'em."

What the man said was true. The expedition that had marched forth so bravely in the morning was an exhausted wreck. The regulars were scarcely able to drag one foot behind the other when they reached Lexington, where they found Earl Percy with a fresh body of troops from Boston drawn up in hollow square.

The desperate fugitives flung themselves on the ground in the protection of their comrades, and lay there helpless, their tongues hanging from their mouths.

Even now they were not safe. Their bitter foe began to press on the larger force with the courage and determination of men within whose grasp was victory. Every minute their numbers grew ; farmers and villagers still came pouring in to the attack.

Percy, alarmed, aroused the exhausted troops and took up his march slowly down the Boston road.

He had two pieces of artillery with him, which he planted on hills at each side of the road. Their hoarse barking and heavy bites held back the militia, unused to war, and awed by cannon.

Seeing the foe slipping from the grasp of the Americans, Jedediah Munroe, lost to all sense of fear or self, thinking only of the score he had to settle, moved forward with the fringe of militiamen against the stiff ranks of the British troops. In his eyes was a wild light ; the light of raging fever ; the light of death.

He heard shouts ; heard his name called. He was vaguely aware that he was alone ; that he had left his comrades behind and was advancing, a solitary figure against the red array. He did not pause ; he did not take thought of what he did, but stalked forward, head held high, the light of death in his eyes.

He stopped. He raised his musket, leveling the barrel at the brilliant ranks ahead of him. The long steel tube danced in a circle ; the enemy swung in wavering lines ahead before him. He pulled the trigger.

With the flash of his gun he saw another flash from the mouth of a cannon. Saw it, and knew no more. A black blow descended upon him from the air. He lay stretched in death on the village green, where he had been taught to be a soldier. He had done his best. Those who were left must do the rest. Theirs the long, weary fight to rid the land of

the foe. Many were to follow where he had preceded to the final bivouac, but in all the array of heroes there was none who would fight a better fight, or achieve a braver death. He had done what he could ; no man can do more.

CHAPTER II

PRESCOTT OF PEPERELL

IT was nine o'clock on the evening of June 14, 1775. The soldiers of the British regiments lay sleeping at their quarters in Boston, save the few that were doing sentry duty about the town, or were posted as sentinels on the lines of defense that had been thrown up against the rabble of "peasants" and "rustics" that had swarmed in after the affair at Lexington and Concord, and settled down in front of the town with an angry hum, to besiege it.

Out in the Mystic River British ships of war swung idly at anchor, giving back sociable whispers to the tide that lapped drowsily about their prows. The tread of their sentinels echoed across the calm water from their deserted decks ; there was no other life awake on board the vessels. They stood like ghosts in the silent stream.

Across the water the town of Charlestown was adrowse. Here and there the light of a candle sparred the darkness through the windows of a room where some sick person lay in pain, or where a bookish citizen, forgetful of the near presence of a hostile army, was absorbed in the pages of a favorite volume.

Behind the town, grim, silent, serene, the huge bulk of hills hunched into the dim night, with lines of rail fence and stone wall traced faintly across gray and yellow fields where new cut grass lay loose and unraked. Solitary and majestic they stood, indifferent to the petty passions of men that were playing the game of war within sight of them ; unmindful of this little bubble that was breaking on the sea of eternity through which they had endured.

The ridge of which they were part came to two prominences. One of them, Breed's Hill, stood in advance of the other, nearer the town and the water, attached to its comrade by a bridging ridge, broad and smooth. The other, Bunker Hill, towered slightly higher than the first. From it the ridge ran backward, growing lower and narrower, until it pinched out and finally disappeared at the narrow neck of land which connected the peninsula, on which the town and hills were situated, with the mainland.

Beyond the neck of land, stretching in a long, thin circle, marked and dotted with earthwork and encampment ; passing through towns and hamlets, crossing field and woods, ridge and river, was the line of the American forces ; the "peasants" and "rustics" that were besieging Boston town. Here and there in the long line camp-fires glowed red against the earth ; here and there lights in some house or village mansion showed that the officers who commanded this array were taking counsel, how

they might drive the hated redcoats from the chief city of the colony.

Over it all, city and river, town and hill, droning camp and silent countryside, hovered the starry silences of night. And city and river, town and hill, camp and countryside, earth and sky, held no hint of the great deeds that were to be performed on the morrow, the first of many deeds that were to awaken the world to a new country, born of liberty and freedom on the shores of the Atlantic.

No hint, unless there was hint of it in a long file of stalking shadows that moved in spectral silence along the road crossing the thin neck behind Charlestown. What could it bode, that long, broken dusky file of shadows that bore on their shoulders muskets, and shovels, and picks? What was the meaning of the carts scattered among the shadows, their wheels wound with wisps of straw to kill the noise of their rolling? The hours, rushing swiftly down out of eternity, were to tell the meaning of that ghost-like procession. At their head strode a tall, rugged, well-knit man, his face raised to the breeze, his alert eyes searching the darkness for the way, glancing at the British ships in the stream, and beyond to where the British regiments lay sleeping in Boston. Col. William Prescott it was, of Peperell; he who had fought with the English against the French at Louisburg in the late war; who had refused a commission in the British army to return to his farm; who had gathered together the minutemen of Peperell when

the alarm came from Concord two months before, and who had not since turned his back on the foes of liberty and freedom in yonder city.

The British regiments slept on; the sentinels continued to tread the empty decks of the British ships of war, calling out that all was well as the hours struck, and the stealthy file of shadows moved out across the neck of land and up the nearest hill—Bunker Hill.

They came to the crest. The thin stream of dusky shadows gathered into broad eddies, whispering softly within themselves. The quiet carts came to a halt. A group of men joined in earnest discussion apart from the others.

“Here is the place,” said one.

“But the other hill is better,” another objected. “Look; it is closer to the town. Our guns could command the city from there, and sweep the British shipping from the river.”

“But there we should be in danger of being cut off,” returned a third. “The enemy could seize the neck of land, and have us bottled up; but if we fortify here we could keep them from it.”

“What is to be gained by holding the position unless we can put it to some use?” argued another. “We could do nothing here against the town or the ships; it is too far. If the other hill is exposed, we must remember that we shall gain nothing without exposure, and war is not a lady’s game, to be played fearfully.”

"Neither is it a game where you should set for yourself traps."

"We should gain enough by holding this hill," went on another, "for it is known that the enemy desire it for their own use, to hold back our own lines. They had planned to seize it soon."

"Come, let us decide," protested Gridley, an engineer who was to lay out the plan of the fort. "We have no time to lose. It is already late to begin."

"Our orders were to fortify Bunker Hill," submitted another of the group. "We had best do as we were told."

Colonel Prescott spoke up. "That is no reason why we should not do as we see fit, now that we are on the ground and can look it over."

So the argument went on to no decision. They walked across to Breed's Hill, and back again, weighing every reason for and against each position, losing much precious time, while the soldiers waited impatiently to begin the task that was ahead of them. It was not until Gridley had urged them time and again, pleading with them to decide one way or the other, that Colonel Prescott gave the order to have the fort built on Breed's Hill, nearer to the town and river, and farthest from the slim neck of land which was their only escape from the position if disaster came upon them.

Presently, on the top of Breed's Hill, there arose a faint busy sound; the thud of picks on the surface of the ground, the click of shovels against stones,

the soft hiss of dirt flung from shovel blades, the sigh of it sinking upon the banks that grew apace, the smothered grunts and labored breathing of men, a low-spoken word now and then of comment, a question asked and answered, a suggestion given. The embankment took form along the lines laid down by Gridley, and grew with a rapidity that seemed like magic. But not one least sound went down from the hill to the sentinels on the deserted decks of the British ships.

Stout lads they were behind the shovels and picks ; men who tilled the soil ; who had fought a hard fight to drag their sustenance from the ground through generations ; who were as familiar with the use of the weapons they plied as with the muskets which lay on the ground ready for what was to follow. And behind the stout lads was an intense feeling of hatred for the foe against whom they labored ; of love for the rights and liberties which that foe disputed, giving them greater strength and endurance for the task.

One hour passed ; two ; three. The work was beginning to look like something ; even those unused to fortifications could see the idea behind it ; the purpose of the angled walls they were throwing up. Doubtful hearts took new courage ; tired muscles and bones forgot their fatigue ; the dirt flew fast and faster. Those at work could hear the ships' bells striking the hour in the river below ; could hear the sentinels on watch cry out : " All's well ; " could

almost hear the tread of their feet on the planks. No hint of their presence on the hill had warned the enemy.

Gray crept into the east ; a faint hue, growing brighter, streaked presently with flushes from the sun rising in the distant ocean. Time pressed ; the work was not completed. Slowly the dim outlines of the hill took form from the hovering dusk ; the town of Charlestown arose from the gulf of darkness that had drowned it from their sight ; the outlines of the ships at anchor in the stream became more and more distinct.

A soldier, stopping to rest, glanced down at the ships. He saw a ball of white smoke leap suddenly from the vessel's side, pierced by a quick, bright flash. Before he had time to exclaim, the air shook with the boom of a cannon. The British on the ships had seen them ; the game had begun.

Another puff of smoke ; another flash, and the boom of another gun rushed up the hill. A second ship spoke ; a third. In ten minutes three of them were pounding away regularly at the mound of earth that had risen during the night, and swarmed now with men looking, from the distant river, like so many ants.

The balls struck around the workers, kicking up a cloud of dust in the hillside, or howling over their heads. There were not many who had been under the fire of heavy guns before ; they looked at one another with long faces. "Courage, men," said

Colonel Prescott, walking among them, calm as a duck. They fell to work once more, watching over their shoulders for the balls.

Prescott, calling an aide, sent him to General Artemus Ward, at Cambridge, with a request for reinforcements. He foresaw that the British would not leave them long in undisputed possession of the hill. Their cannonading was too vigorous; too businesslike.

Those on the hill could see soldiers and dragoons running to and fro over in the streets of Boston bearing messages, carrying alarms. People began to appear in vacant lots, on verandahs, on roofs, to see what the clatter was all about. The sight they saw held them excited witnesses. They knew what it meant. They knew that if their friends were permitted to hold the hill Boston could no longer be occupied by the British; and they knew that if the British should try to take the hill there would shortly be a sight worth seeing.

A cannon shot, finding its way into the throng of diggers, struck down a soldier. He kicked the dirt with his heels once, stiffened, wriggled, and lay quiet, without uttering a cry, or a sob. The sight appalled the farmers not used to seeing men slaughtered in such fashion. They drew away from the victim of the shot, anxious, disturbed, worried.

Colonel Prescott, seeing the fear growing among them, leapt upon the top of the embankment, with drawn sword in his hand.

"A chance shot; a chance shot!" he cried, walking to and fro quietly, with head erect. "Never mind them, men. We have work to do."

The sight of the man walking calmly in such exposure reassured them. They picked up their implements again, and renewed their digging.

Companies of redcoats began to form in the streets near the river. Officers, hurrying up in full uniform, sent them hither and yon, forming them into battalions and regiments. Others came marching down the streets to join them. All was bustle and excitement.

Colonel Prescott, marching back and forth on top of the embankment, turned an anxious eye toward Charlestown Neck. He had sent several messages earlier in the morning to Cambridge urging General Ward to send more troops. He saw bodies of them coming in the distance. Looking from time to time, he saw them draw nearer and emerge upon the thin strip of land.

As they reached this point, two British barges, anchored near the neck, opened on them heavily. Prescott beheld the Americans continue to move at even pace through the drift of fire, and come toward him, on the hill. Presently he saw that it was John Stark, with his New Hampshire boys.

Others came after him; Putnam, Pomeroy, Knowlton. There was confusion on the hill. None knew who was in command; each officer went about the work of preparing for the British as he saw fit

Stark, passing over the ridge, hurried with his men into the sloping field on the left, where others were already at work transforming a stone and rail fence into a work of defense by building another rail fence in front of it, and stuffing between the two the new-mown hay which strewed the ground.

Colonel Prescott, watching from the top of the parapet, where he continued to walk exposed to the bombardment as an example to his men, caught sight of some one approaching whose presence brought him down in a leap from his elevated position, and sent him hurrying forward to meet the newcomer. It was Dr. Warren, leader of the patriots in and about Boston. Warren was young—only thirty-four—but he had already distinguished himself. Twice, on anniversaries of the Boston Massacre, he had delivered orations in Old South Meeting-House in Boston, when British officers had sworn that the man who endeavored to address the meeting would not be permitted to live. He had been president of the Massachusetts assembly; next to Samuel Adams and John Hancock he was the most important and influential man in the colony. Lately he had been elected a major-general in the army by the assembly. Prescott, holding no commission, hastened to surrender command to him. Putnam, coming up at the moment, made the same offer.

“I thank you, gentlemen,” replied Dr. Warren, generously, “but I have come to serve as a volunteer in the ranks. Not feeling myself suited to the re-

sponsibility of leading, I much prefer shouldering a musket, with which I hope I shall be able to effect more than I could with a sword."

No urging would induce him to change his decision ; borrowing a musket, he took position behind the embankment of the redoubt, which was now nearly completed, where he greatly heartened the tired men by his presence.

There was another volunteer on that day whom history knows. James Otis, one of the first leaders of thought among the patriots in the times when King George was beginning to make himself detestable, had suffered a beating at the hands of a British officer in Boston several years before, from the effects of which he lost his mind. A sister took him to live with her at Watertown. Learning early in the morning that Bunker Hill was being fortified, and that there would probably be a battle, he stole away from her house, stopped at a tavern to borrow a musket, trudged across Charlestown Neck, made his way to the redoubt, and stood there now, musket in hand, waiting for the time to come when he could deal a blow in answer to those he had received. The one passion of his life—love of human rights and hatred of tyranny—had risen through the mists that obscured his brain and driven him there to the fort, clear of purpose, stalwart, determined.

All along the line, from the four sides of the redoubt to the tip of the rail fence next the river, everything was astir. Foot by foot the defenses grew

stronger ; the walls thicker and higher ; the platforms behind the parapets broader and more secure. With men enough, and with powder enough, they might hope to hold out against any direct attack of the enemy. But they had neither men nor powder enough. The soldiers in the works were tired with a long night of labor without sleep ; and powder was pitiably scarce. Prescott had sent for more ; many and many a time he cast an eager eye toward the neck to see whether it was coming.

But there was another danger, graver than scarcity of men and powder. They realized it better now that daylight showed the lay of the land than they had when they began to erect the redoubt in the darkness. By seizing Charlestown Neck, which they could easily do with the aid of their boats, the enemy could capture the entire American force. The fort on the hill was no defense against such a movement ; and there was no egress from the Charlestown peninsula except by way of the neck. Putnam, seeing this clearly, formed men on Bunker Hill, in the rear of the works, where they would be able partially to cover a retreat.

Now barges were being brought up to the water side in Boston town, where the redcoats were formed ready to embark. If there had been any doubt about the intentions of General Sir William Howe, the British commanding officer, they were settled now. It was clear that he meant to fight, and that he meant to fight hard, if need be. For he had drawn up

three regiments of his best troops, and was about to embark them in the barges.

All this time the fire from the ships, and from a battery on Copp's Hill, had continued to pepper the works of the Americans, but without much damage. The "peasants" and "rustics" were used to cannon fire by this time; they had already found out that its bark was worse than its bite. They were resting now behind the works they had labored so hard to throw up, and were eating a bit of food. They were tired and hungry enough for it, you may know.

Fancy the sight from Boston! The day was crystal clear; the sun bright and sparkling; the sky without a cloud. Over on the hill behind the little suburb of Charlestown they could clearly see the fort where the night before had been only vacant fields. They could see their friends still busying about here and there, putting the last touches on their defenses. The long slopes that ran from the Mystic to the fortified crest of the hill lay under their eyes like a theater; fields green with grass, yellow with hay, interlaced by fences. Down by the river, at Moulton's point, the regulars were marching off their boats and deploying in long lines, vivid red lines against the green; a magnificent and terrible sight.

Colonel Prescott was glad in his stout heart that the enemy were going to attack in front. He had dreaded more and more a movement against his rear by way of Charlestown Neck. He knew his

men. Exhausted though they were by loss of sleep and labor without food, he knew that they would hurl back any advance up the exposed slopes, and welcomed it. His only doubt, his only fear, was that the powder would give out.

You may wonder why Howe did not seize the neck, as he could have done. Many have raised the question. The answer is amusing—and tragic. He, and his fellow-officers with him, believed that the “peasants” and “rustics” were cowards; that they would not stand before the British regulars; that they would turn and run after firing a shot or two. Belief in their cowardice had been encouraged by English statesmen at home. Howe, believing it, thought that he could sweep the hill clean in a brave advance. He would not do the enemy the honor of making a flank movement; that would be a recognition of their fighting capacity which he was not willing to admit.

To the beat of drums the red-coated lines formed in ranging ranks and moved forward; one wing, led by Howe in person, against the stone wall and rail fence and the other, under General Pigot, against the redoubt. You can imagine that there was a deal of suppressed excitement among the farmers waiting for them on the hill. Many of them had never been in battle, and those who had had faced only the French and Indians in the late war. The British had a reputation for terrible courage. The Americans knew how well the enemy could fight. Some of the

regiments that advanced against the inexperienced farmers had glorious histories behind them of battles fought and won ; of sieges sustained, and deeds of valor.

I hope that you and I would have been as calm and cool in the face of that advancing array as were those who stood behind their hasty defenses. There was not a sound, not a movement, behind the redoubt walls and the rail fence, excepting now and then a low word of comment that ran its course through the attacked, or a quiet order from some officer pacing up and down the lines.

"Aim low," was the word. "Aim at their belts." Their belts were pretty things to shoot at ; white against the scarlet coats.

"Hold' your fire. Wait until you see the whites of their eyes," said Israel Putnam to the men at the fence.

You must remember that the muskets used in those days were smooth-bore affairs firing a round ball. They did not shoot straight for more than fifty or sixty yards. Beyond that distance the bullet would go sailing off in almost any direction. In order to hit the mark, the man behind the musket had to wait until the target was close ; less than the length of two baseball paths. You can imagine that that would be a hard thing for raw fighters to do, when a brave array was marching against them with bayonets fixed, firing as they came.

Closer and closer up the slopes drew the red ranks.

They came slowly, in regular lines, as though on parade. In front of them marched their officers, speaking over their shoulders to the men. A glorious sight on that June morning—and a terrible.

Colonel Prescott stood on a platform behind the parapet of the redoubt, watching them come. From time to time he looked along the lines inside the fortification. He saw eager faces straining over the top of the embankment; saw strong fingers toying nervously with lock and trigger; saw Dr. Warren, young, brave, handsome, shoulder to shoulder with a farmer lad from Groton; saw the pitiful, wistful face of James Otis, the lips moving, perhaps in silent repetition of some of the words he had hurled in his day against the British king, ready now to hurl more deadly missiles against the hirelings of that king who had come to do his despotic bidding.

The ranks of the British came to a halt a hundred yards away. They lifted their muskets with a steady sweep, smooth and regular as the working of a machine. The Americans could hear the order given to fire. There was a flat sheet of flame, a swirling cloud of gray smoke, the crash of a volley. Heads disappeared behind the embankment. The bullets whistled harmlessly above, or pattered into the soft earth, sending up little spurts of dust, and releasing tiny avalanches that slid to rest, covering the balls. No one was hurt; no harm done.

Some one fired a shot from the redoubt, unable to contain his impatience. Away down along the fence

there was another shot, and another. Colonel Prescott, seeing more muskets leveled over the ramparts, leaped toward them and struck them up with his sword.

"Stop firing!" he shouted. "You are wasting powder. Wait until I give the sign."

Dr. Warren, glancing along the ranks on either side, repeated the order. It ran through the line. Soldiers restrained each other; silence fell on the redoubt as the men settled down to wait once more.

Another halt, and another volley from the foe. Again a few of the Americans gave way to eagerness, and fired; and again they were restrained by officers and men. Every bullet must count; every ounce of powder must be well spent, if they were to drive back that magnificent array of valor.

Seventy yards, sixty, fifty-five; and still there was no sign of fight in the redoubt or along the fence. The British could not understand. Were the Americans greater cowards even than they had been reported to be? Were they going to turn and run without firing a single shot?

Fifty yards—and they had their answer. Colonel Prescott, his face alight with a sudden exultation, turned to his men. "Now!" he said, in a voice that was little more than a whisper.

With the quickness of magic the top of the fort was fringed thick with muskets. There was a pause, while the men took aim, and then a rattle of fire

began, growing faster and faster until it merged into a continuous clatter.

Out in front of the work, fifty yards away, was a horrible scene. The front rank of the British had disappeared; melted away in the heat of a gun fire the like of which British veterans had never faced before. Soldiers lay squirming in heaps on the grass. Some, lifting themselves on hands or elbows, clutched at their sudden wounds and cried out to the sky overhead in their bitter anguish. Others lay still; others merely groaned, or sobbed, with eyes slowly fixing and glazing.

The red ranks stopped, staggered and aghast at the destruction that had leapt upon them from the bristling walls. They looked this way and that over the carnage, puzzled, confused, unable to understand the meaning of it. It was beyond their experience. They saw their fellows writhing in death throes on every hand. They saw officers on whom they depended for encouragement and command strewing the grass in front of them. They drew together like frightened horses in a storm, staring wistfully at each other.

Fast and furiously the Americans plied their guns within the redoubt, and behind the rail fence. Howe had met no better fate there than Pigot here. His men were shattered, dumbly hopeless. Howe himself, standing in advance of them, watched them dropping one by one before the steady fire of the "peasants." He waved his sword, shouting courage to them.

Habit, the habit of bravery, held the demoralized ranks where they were in the midst of the withering fire. Presently, standing there, they began to load and fire back, aimlessly, from force of habit.

Those in the redoubt did not mind their firing. With a skill born of long usage of guns in forest and field, the countrymen loaded, aimed carefully, and fired at the white belts against the red coats. It was like picking off partridges. They worked swiftly, but calmly, without hurry. They did not waste a shot; each selected his victim and aimed deliberately at him before he pulled the trigger.

"See that officer over there? Watch me hit him!" cried the Groton lad, next to Dr. Warren. The piece was steadied; it leapt against the lad's cheek at the pull of the trigger, and the British officer, brave and gay in his fine uniform, crumpled up and plunged forward, his face ploughing in the dirt. The lad laughed.

So it went. Prescott, running here and there, watchful, took a musket from a wounded man and fired it. His eye caught sight of James Otis, gazing in fascination over the top of the works as he loaded his musket mechanically. He stopped to watch the old broken man fire; saw the light of battle gleaming in his eye; swallowed a sob of pity in memory of all the man had been.

It could not last forever. Flesh and blood could not stand such murder, if British courage could. The regulars—those that were left of them,—turned,

and marched down the hill ; marched with the slow step and even ranks of soldiers on parade.

As they started a hundred men leapt from the works to pursue, going over the top of the parapet in a cloud.

“Halt!” cried Colonel Prescott, leaping after them and dragging them by their sleeves. “Come back.” They must not give up the advantage of their defenses ; they could not meet in open field British regulars that outnumbered them two to one.

Officers and soldiers ran up and down within the works, restraining their too anxious comrades. All was confusion for a moment. It was not like an army, that force of defenders. There was no discipline, no authority that they would all recognize. Orders had to be enforced by persuasion, and not by force.

When quiet was restored at last the tired men settled back at their posts to snatch a bit of rest before another attack—if there should be another. It had been hot work while it lasted, after their long night with the pick and shovel.

Dr. Warren stepped up to Colonel Prescott. “I congratulate you, sir, on a noble defense,” he said, warmly.

“We have the men to thank for that, doctor,” returned Prescott. “Brave men like yourself.”

“I am only one who is doing my best,” rejoined the doctor, modestly.

"That's all any of them are. Every man here is just one, doing his best."

"Will they attempt it again, colonel?" asked Dr. Warren, glancing down the hill at the enemy.

"They are British soldiers, and they want the hill, doctor," returned the commanding officer. "That is all I am able to say."

"They will not have their wish, sir!" declared Dr. Warren.

"They would not, if we had enough powder," the other returned. "Tired as our men are, they would hold the hill if they had anything left to shoot with."

"Is the powder gone?"

"We have enough for another assault, if they make it."

"We shall have enough; they will not take the hill," Warren repeated, emphatically. "They cannot vanquish such courage as this."

"You can't load a musket with courage and kill an enemy with it," replied Prescott.

Warren was silent for a moment. "James Otis is here," he went on.

"I have seen him; it is pathetic."

"And it is glorious. Age has bent his body, and the British have beaten out the light of his brain, but nothing can smother the flame in his soul that has exalted him above his fellows in the fight for freedom which we now see drawing to a climax. It is sublimely magnificent that he should be here, driven by the same high passion that has animated his life."

"Heaven spare him from death!" murmured Prescott.

"On the contrary, colonel, would it not be a fitting end if this day were to put a period to his glorious life? It would be a fitting conclusion to his labors."

"Aye," returned Colonel Prescott, "and a fitting conclusion to the labors of any man to die this day. It is a glorious day, sir."

About to reply, Dr. Warren's speech was arrested by something that his eye had caught in swinging over the panorama below them. All this time the ships in the stream, and the battery on Copp's Hill had been pounding away at the patriots' works, raising a great din and smoke, but without any other notable result. "See," he said, "there is more smoke than usual, Charlestown way. 'Tis a black smoke, moreover," Warren went on. "Can you make out the meaning of it?"

"The British have set fire to Charlestown," Prescott announced, after a moment's view.

"Why?" cried Warren, hotly. "Why have they done such a wanton thing?"

"To cover their movements," Prescott replied. "It means that they are going to try again."

"Outrageous!" exclaimed Dr. Warren.

A mutter of anger arose from the patriot ranks at the sight of the burning town. The fire, set by red-hot shot from the British vessels, sprang up in a number of places and grew apace. The black

smoke-pall lifted lazily into the air and drifted skyward, without serving the purpose for which the fire had been kindled. The long hill-slopes were as clear and bright under the sun as they had been.

Down by the river the British were eating their lunches, and waiting for the arrival of fresh troops. It was clear that Howe intended another attack like the first. Presently the Americans saw the troops forming again in lines of battle; heard the beat of drums, and beheld the enemy advancing once more.

Prescott, standing on the parapet, turned his eyes toward Charlestown Neck again. Where was the powder he had sent for so urgently? Why was it not coming up? Once more they could hold back this fierce flood, and then they would be helpless.

Slowly, with steadfast courage, the British ranks moved up the slope. One hundred yards away they were; seventy; fifty. At intervals they stopped to fire a volley, and came on again. The guns of ship and battery made incessant thunder; the black smoke of burning Charlestown rolled heavenward. Silent, grim, resolute, the patriots waited in their defenses.

Thirty yards away the British marched; the length of a baseball path. Suddenly the redoubt and the rail fence again became volcanoes, spitting hot leaden death upon the soldiers of the king. Once more the ranks withered away; once more they stood appalled; once more they retreated, this time on the run. The Americans from behind their works



SLOWLY THE BRITISH RANKS MOVED UP THE SLOPE



could see them straggling down the hill in drifting lines, some of them helping wounded comrades, others making the best time they could alone.

Silence reigned in the fortifications. Would the enemy try again? The men were exhausted. Their powder was gone. No more came. Some of the men had three rounds left, some only one. They broke open the cannon cartridges and passed around that powder. It barely increased the pitiable store.

Hours passed. It was five o'clock. The day was nearly done. The farmers on the hill began to breathe more easily. They were certain the red-coats would not try again. They chattered and joked each other in relief.

Then they saw the brave regulars moving forward for a third time.

Up, up the hill they came, drums beating, colors flying, the long, straight ranks marching in martial step. Closer and closer they came. Now the patriots could see the faces of the British; now they could see their eyes.

In the moment when the defense was bracing itself for the last shock, the long line wheeled, folded up, bunched, and was hurled in solid mass against the redoubt.

Sharp spoke the rifles of the Americans. The red-coated ranks held back, shirking the task, shrinking from the punishment that had been theirs twice before.

"Powder! Powder!" called out a farmer lad in

the redoubt, in an ill-starred moment. "Where is more powder? We're out of powder."

The Englishmen heard the call, and knew what it meant. They dashed forward. The shots that met them thinned out, becoming more and more infrequent.

In the lead of the attacking column was a slim figure of a man; a major of grenadiers. He leaped upon the top of the parapet, sword in hand. "Up, men," he shouted. "They've nothing left to shoot."

The Americans saw him. They recognized him at once. An angry shout went up. "Shoot him!" they cried. "It's Pitcairn. Kill him!" It was the Pitcairn that had led the British to Concord, he who had fired the first shot in this war.

Half a dozen muskets spoke. The major of grenadiers grew limp, caved in, and toppled down from the top of the wall, a dead man.

But others came; too many others. There were not bullets for them all. They gained the crest of the work; they poured inside. Their bayonets flashed in the sunlight, driven home in patriot bodies. They were met with clubbed muskets in the hands of brave men. But the patriots were no match. Driven from place to place, they fought stoutly, only to fall beneath the pointed steel or the bullets which the foe still had in plenty.

Prescott, standing in the midst of the conflict, saw that his men were being wasted in a hopeless, useless slaughter. He rushed here and there directing re-

sistance, but to no purpose. Each effort to stem the rising tide of redcoats only resulted in death to the Americans. The hill was lost.

"Retreat!" he cried.

"Retreat! Retreat!" rang along the ranks.

Slowly, doggedly, the patriots withdrew in clustering bands, fighting off those who pressed upon them.

Prescott, loitering and looking about to see that all had heard, and were getting off, beheld a sight that stopped his heart; that all but sent him back into the fray to die. Dr. Warren, tall, agile, was standing beneath the parapet, surrounded by British, beating them off with a sword he had snatched up. On his face was a light that told why he was there. He was there still because he would not leave; because he would not abandon the post that they had fought for so bravely.

Even as Prescott looked he saw a bayonet thrust through Warren's body, and saw him pitched on the ground dead.

With a raging heart, he turned once more and followed his men, who were walking away reluctantly, stopping now and then to snarl a curse back at the British. They were joined by men leaving the rail fence, where the British had found lodgment in the excitement that attended the taking of the redoubt. All were sullen, disappointed, angry, —but not disheartened. They left the field of battle as they left the field of ploughing at the close of

other days ; without haste, without fear. For they had learned that American yeomen could stand their ground against the regulars of England, and that was enough. They had lost the hill, but another time, and many other times, they would put their valor to the proof. That they knew ; and that the British knew as well. Defeat had come with the end of day ; but it was the beginning of a braver day for those who had fought the good fight.

And up in the redoubt, on the top of the hill, British redcoats gathered in silent, thoughtful groups watching the "rustics" whom they had taken for cowards as they straggled down the ridge and across Charlestown Neck. No one had a thought of following ; for all had had enough.

CHAPTER III

LUCK AND A BLIZZARD

FOUR or five young men sat huddled about the kitchen fire in the Caldwell house, on the Plains of Abraham, behind Quebec. They wore the red coats of British infantry, but they were American soldiers. The coats had been made of cloth taken when they captured Montreal. They were glad enough to have any coats to their backs ; for the time was late December, and the winter was bitter cold out-of-doors.

You would not have thought they were soldiers if you had seen them sitting about the fire, in spite of their red coats. They had not a military bearing ; they slouched in their chairs, careless of their appearance. Their faces were thin and drawn by hardships ; their bodies were reduced to strands of lean muscle and sinew. They had come many weary miles with their comrades to drive the English from the capital of Canada, and take the town for the colonies.

The winter wind was howling dismally without, blowing keen from the frozen fields of Hudson's Bay. Drafts, creeping through chinks in the door-sill, drove them shivering close to the fire. In the next room there was the sound of voices muttering in dis-

cussion. Now and then the tread of an impatient boot was heard. The Caldwell house was the headquarters of Richard Montgomery ; he and his officers were in a council of war.

Richard Montgomery was a man you would have loved. Bred a soldier in the English army, he had served with Wolfe when that general captured Quebec from the French nineteen years before, in a fight that had taken place within half a mile of where he was now taking counsel concerning the capture of the place from the English. Tiring at last of the profession of arms, he had resigned his commission as captain, sailed for America, and settled in New York, where he married a daughter of the Livingstons. You ought to know about the Livingstons ; they were a brave and splendid family in our early history.

When trouble broke out between the colonies and the British crown Montgomery had seen the truth of the conflict, and cast his lot with the patriots on the side of human rights. After the battle of Bunker Hill he had started for Canada with a force of New York and New England troops, intending to seize the British strongholds in the province and so prevent the enemy from descending against New York and severing the eastern colonies from the western. Now, having taken the English fort at St. Johns, and captured Montreal, he was before the gates of the City of Quebec ; the post vital to the English cause in America.

Another force was with him behind the city. Benedict Arnold, starting from the mouth of the Kennebec, in Maine, with 1,100 men in the summer before, had brought some of them through with him to the St. Lawrence, had crossed the river with them, and taken position on the Plains of Abraham. It was a dreadful journey up the Kennebec in huge, cumbrous plank boats, across the divide, and down the Chaudiere. Of the 1,100 who started scarcely 500 reached the end of the journey. Many turned back, ill or discouraged; many died by the way. Long before they reached Canada they had run out of provisions. Much of their food was lost in the water through the overturning of their craft; much, getting wet, spoiled. For days the survivors had lived on roots dug out of the mud with bleeding knuckles; on the leather of old shoes and hunting shirts, boiled, which they sucked and chewed. They killed and devoured some dogs that had come with the party. They would have starved utterly had not Arnold gone ahead with some others and brought back cattle and horses laden with food.

Arnold had depended on surprise to capture the British city. His surprise failed. Letters that he had sent ahead to confidential friends fell into the hands of the enemy, forewarning them. When his five hundred appeared opposite the city early in November the foe was on the alert. Even then he could have taken the town by a bold movement. He saw the chance, and prepared to take it.

His only hope was to cross the river above the city and storm the gates in the fortification facing the Plains of Abraham. It was a slim chance. Quebec had natural defenses almost insurmountable. The Plains of Abraham broke down in sharp cliffs on three sides. At the end of the promontory thus formed was the city ; Upper Town, straggling down from the summit, and Lower Town, in the narrow space between the base of the huge hill and the St. Lawrence. On the right hand of the plains lay the St. Lawrence, with scarcely room for a roadway between the foot of the bluff and high tide. To the left was the St. Charles, a smaller stream. The whole was amply walled and fortified.

But Arnold believed there was a chance. He knew of the place where Wolfe had scaled the heights of Abraham ; the only place for several miles where the summit could be gained from the river. He believed that if he gained the plains and moved briskly against the fortifications from that side he could carry them before the defenders could prevent him. They would not expect such a move from a force as weak as his. The few men he had were half starved and in their scant garments were already shivering with the cold.

One night he ferried his army across, dodging the British war vessels and scout boats guarding the St. Lawrence. The prospect was bright, when the last boat encountered one of the guard boats in the very cove where the others had landed, and fired on it in

an attempt to capture it and prevent its men from alarming the garrison. After that Arnold felt he could not risk an attack, believing the foe would be aroused and would infest the works before he could strike a blow.

The incident was a part of the ill fortune that followed the American arms, of which you shall hear more presently.

When Montgomery joined Arnold's band with three hundred more soldiers and took command they did their best to frighten the city into surrendering, but without success. Perhaps they would have succeeded if it had not been for another bit of hard luck. When Montgomery captured the British army at Montreal the British commander, Sir Guy Carleton, a brave man and an able, had slipped away in a boat, disguised as a farmer, and escaped. It was Carleton who organized the defense of the town, gave it backbone, and held the garrison stiff when the Americans' threats and demands promised to intimidate them.

The situation grew desperate. The Canadian winter was already upon them, with all its horrors. They could hope for no more help from the colonies until spring. Meanwhile the city was likely to grow stronger, and the besiegers weaker. The only chance seemed to lay in an assault. The men were willing and anxious to make the attempt. The officers planned it carefully.

Three nights previous they had tried. It was a

night of storm ; a savage wind, a cloudy sky, and a swirling snow, which obscured their movements from the enemy. Arnold, with one-third of the army, had moved against the Lower Town along the St. Charles, and Montgomery, with the remainder, had advanced toward the bastion that crowned Cape Diamond, the highest point in the bluff overlooking the St. Lawrence. His men carried scaling ladders with them which they had been weeks in making. But before they could carry out their plans the snow had ceased, the clouds had broken away, and the stars had come out, making the movement impossible.

Now they were waiting for another favorable night.

The group of soldiers about the kitchen fire were discussing the situation with the wisdom peculiar to soldiers. Most of them belonged to Montgomery's command, but two had come from Arnold's camp with his officers. Arnold himself was in the room with Montgomery, and Morgan, and Aaron Burr, who had accompanied the expedition all the way from Maine. Morgan had led his Virginia riflemen, but Burr had come as a gentleman volunteer.

"'Tis a bitter, biting night without," said one of the men in the kitchen. "If it should but snow now, as it gives promise to do, we are like to have fair work to keep us warm before morning."

"For my part, I would welcome it," put in another. "I have no stomach for this abiding in mud huts through a northern winter, with the snow up to the arms on a level stretch, and far over your head

when it comes to drifts. I would rather be home about my own warm fire, with my babes clambering over my knees."

"Right you are," quoth a third.

"Hush, for shame," spoke one of Montgomery's men. "Would you desert a fair cause for a bit of adverse weather?"

"Not so; but if the thing is to be done, let it be done quickly," rejoined the second speaker.

"'Tis too late," observed one, who had kept silence until now. "The chance has slipped past us."

"How so?" demanded two or three, hotly.

"Why, that's plain enough to any man," the other replied. "If we do not hit them with surprise what chance have we of winning? And we can no longer surprise them."

"You speak folly!" cried one of them.

"Nay; for our plans are known. How, then, shall we surprise them?"

"How say you? How are they known?"

"Blockhead! Did not Sergeant Singleton go over to the enemy since our trial of the other night? Think you he has not told ere this what we intended?"

"Nay, but that gives us the better chance!" cried another. "For now they will be expecting us at the Cape Diamond bastion and will bring their forces thither, so that we may pass some other way unopposed."

The soldier had hit upon the truth. Such was the plan even then brewing in the other room. Already the officers had agreed that the main attack was to be delivered by Arnold through the Lower Town by way of the St. Charles, while Montgomery moved along the St. Lawrence at the base of Cape Diamond and came upon the defenses from the opposite quarter; feints to be maintained meanwhile against the faces of the fort and the gates exposed to the Plains of Abraham.

"We have but to wait for a fitting night, and all will be over," the soldier went on.

"Aye, over, one way or t' other, and I, for one, shall be glad enough," rejoined the dismal one, thinking of home and little ones.

The talk broke into new channels. The two who had come across the wilderness of Maine with Arnold's expedition fell to telling the others of their experiences; how they had fought up the swift stream with their heavy bateaux, sometimes rowing, sometimes poling, sometimes wading in the water to their waists or necks; how they had carried the boats around falls and rapids, floundering in the mud with the burdens gnawing into the flesh of their shoulders, sometimes sprawling in a heap under the boats; how they had laughed over it all as they lay at night in their wet clothes, until the food began to give out and sickness spread among them. They told of the horrid days when hunger weakened them; of pulling out lean roots and gnawing them for

nourishment ; of boiled boot-leather for food. They made the eyes of their listeners stare when they spoke of the weary journey over the interminable hills between the head waters of the Kennebec and the Chaudiere. There it was that they first ceased trying to help fallen companions, leaving them to die in the wilderness, a food for wolves and crows. It was all each could do to take care of himself. Barefooted, haggard, gaunt, with clothing in shreds and streaming in the cooling winds, they had pushed onward along the banks of the Chaudiere until at last food came to them in the shape of cattle driven by Arnold and his small party.

"Will you ever forget the sight of those cattle?" cried one of Arnold's men, spinning the yarn, to the other. "I saw dust rising between some hills ahead, and pretty soon what should I see coming toward us but critters. When I first caught sight of the horns I could not but think that my day had come, and the evil one was meeting me to take me away with him. For that matter, I believe I would have exchanged places then for everlasting torment of eternity, so poor I was in body and mind."

"That I did not see," spoke up the other who had come with the Maine expedition, "for early on that day I had stumbled over a log and lain there, too weak to rise. I watched the others go staggering by, and felt sorry for them. And glad enough I was to have it over with, too. My troubles were ended. I said a prayer, and fell asleep as I lay, never doubt-

ing that I should wake in the next world. And when some one woke me, I thought it was the next world, sure enough. They gave me a bit of food, and put me in a boat, and brought me down to my comrades. When the wind blows too sharp of nights, and my feet are nigh freezing in my blankets, I think of that day, and bless God that things are no worse with me now."

There was a scuffle of feet in the next room, the door opened, and the officers began to file out, still talking to each other over their shoulders. Arnold, handsome, lively, quick-eyed, conversed with the giant Morgan; a man of sad visage and deep-set eyes, with a soul as big in courage as was his body. Little Aaron Burr, keen of limb and tongue, brilliant of eye and wit, dapper, neat, was with them. Who would have believed that this one and the brave Arnold would one day be traitors to the country for which they were suffering now so stoutly? Within the room the soldiers caught glimpses of Montgomery, delicately handsome, genteel; a man equally popular in the parlor and ballroom, or the mess and battle-field. Their plans were made; they had cast themselves upon fortune. How well she used them we shall see.

Amos Hargreaves, glancing into the room, felt something cold and moist against his dangling wrist. It was the nose of a spaniel, proffering acquaintance. The dog had come unobserved from the room where the officers had been in council.

"Yah! Get away!" cried Amos, in sudden angry disgust, kicking out at the dog.

"Have a care!" flashed one of Montgomery's soldiers, observing what passed. "Lay a hand on that beast and you will have me to answer to. It is the general's dog, come all the way from New York, that you would kick!"

Hargreaves was about to reply in kind, when his comrade broke in. "Give no heed!" he cried. "Amos cannot abide dogs since we had them for fare on the march. Is it not so, Amos?"

"Aye, that it is," returned the other. "And in sooth I thought I had seen a ghost, for we had one very like this with us."

The spaniel's champion in pity forgave the fellow, and the dog went about among the others, seeking friends with cold nose and wagging tail. But he gained no attention. Other matters of more importance were in the air.

Arnold and Morgan, passing to the door that opened into the yard, flung back the portal to go out. As they did so a gust of wind swept in, making the candle flame dance giddily. With it came a swirl of floating snow. Those in the room could see snow driving in long straight lines across the light from the open door. The storm had arrived; the hour had come.

Arnold, stopping in the aperture, called back to Montgomery, who came out to look abroad. "'Tis a fair beginning," he remarked. "Another hour or

two of this, and the time will be fit. Make haste to be ready for it, colonel."

With a quick farewell and a promise to meet in the city below, Arnold took his departure, accompanied by Morgan and the other officers who had attended the council with him. The two soldiers, wrapping themselves close in their coats, bade their companions good-bye, and followed out into the night. It was then near midnight.

Montgomery was unhappy. Alone in his room, he strode up and down the floor in anxious impatience. He felt the weight of what he was about to do. He had not come in command of the invading force from choice. Only a sense of duty had compelled him. He would have preferred to remain at home with his wife, tending to the simple duties of his farm, which he loved. But when General Schuyler's health failed, there had been no one else to assume command, and he had taken the responsibility. He was not reluctant, or regretful; he was only unhappy.

The prospect of success was bright. The night already gave promise of being such a night as he had been waiting for. The wind was increasing, and the long lines of driven snow were growing denser. Unless luck went against him, fame and glory were in his grasp. Indeed, fame and glory would be his in any event; for he knew that the thing he was about to do was a glorious thing; that it would be told of him in years to come. Still he

was unhappy. He cared nothing for fame and glory. He longed for the quiet pursuits of his farm.

Perhaps he had a premonition of what impended as he paced to and fro on the floor, glancing out of the window to watch the weather at each turn. The spaniel, coiled up on a rug before the fire, wistfully watching its master, seemed to have a foreboding. Now and then it would arise to its feet and trot after him, dejectedly, whining softly to itself.

"Ah, Rocco, little fellow," said the general, pausing in his stride to stoop and stroke the dog, "you would much better have stayed at home with your mistress. This is no work for you."

He walked to the window again, gazed into the whirling dark for a space, turned back to his desk, sat down, and began to write.

Two o'clock on the morning of December 31, 1775. The night was black. Through the utter darkness swung the stinging snow in straight lines. Deadly cold it was; so cold that arms were numb, that legs moved sluggishly, and heads swam with the pain of it.

What were those shadows, blacker than the black night, gathering in huddled groups on the Plains of Abraham? Standing in ominous silence, heads bowed, arms hugging their sides? They were the soldiers of Montgomery, forming to strike a blow for freedom. Whose the slim, straight, quick moving

figure passing swiftly amongst them with cheering words? Montgomery himself, the valiant and chivalric, who had left wife and home to lay his blow along with the others against the foe.

And between his master's knees, shaking with the cold, whining piteously as he cast imploring glances into the face of the soldier, was the spaniel which Amos had kicked at in the farmer's cottage.

A sharp word, and the groups began to unwind into a long file of moving shadows. Their backs were turned on the walls of the city; they went up the river, with the wind behind them. In their lead trudged Montgomery, the spaniel hopping dejectedly at his heels.

It was a weary way they went over the storm-swept plains. The wind was more piercing every step; but it was in their backs now, and the exercise of walking sent the blood driving through their veins. Now and then the head of the line was lost, floundering in some treacherous drift; now and then it stopped to make certain of the way, for landmarks were invisible, and they must trust to that sense which men develop who travel much afoot in the open.

At last they swung off to the left and plunged down the ravine that led to Wolfe's Cove. Reaching the water level, and pushing out from the shelter of the gully, they turned back toward the city, two miles away, and faced the blizzard.

Was ever such a thing done before? A handful

of men, ill-fed, scantily clothed, marching through a freezing blizzard to strike against an enemy stronger than they, quartered comfortably in a place that scarcely needed defense? Into the hissing teeth of the gale they plunged, heads down, feet stumbling against the hidden road; floundering in drifts to their shoulders; scarce able to look up because of the cutting snow, and able to see nothing when they looked up because of the utter darkness of the storm-ridden night.

You have known what it is to be cold. Your hands have ached in a snowball fight; your feet have suffered on the skating pond. Perhaps you have had a frost-bitten cheek, or an ear. Undoubtedly you have plied your sled on a hill until you were chilled through and through. That is all very well; but always there was prospect of your warm home ahead of you when you chose to go to it, and a doughnut, or a slice of bread; a book and a chair snug to the fire.

Not so these men. Living in the open, half fed and half clothed, they had scarcely been warm for a month; and if there was warmth ahead they must win it by paying the price in blood. No refuge from the blizzard; no stopping when they chose; no shelter anywhere for them but in the enemy's stronghold. If a hand or a foot was freezing, they must let it freeze. If the snow-charged wind bit to the marrow, they could only shiver and sigh and plunge onward into its jaws. Cold guns in hand, they

must go forward, wrapping a handkerchief over the flintlock, or robbing their body of the shelter of a coat skirt to protect the firing pan from the damp. We who live now can scarcely conceive of such fortitude.

Marching at their head went the slim Montgomery, weighted down with the responsibility of the tremendous thing he was attempting with the lives of those who struggled behind him. What were the chances? He dared not reckon them. He could only reassure himself that there was no other way. It must be victory or death.

Once, plowing through a heavy drift, he stopped half-way, stooped over, and swept up the spaniel. "You little rogue," he scolded, thrusting the dog under his coat. "You think yourself a soldier; but a soldier would have obeyed orders, and stayed at home." Yet in his brave heart he was glad the dog had come; glad to carry him through the drifts and the flinging storm.

The column, stumbling in long file through the deep snow, heard the crash of a cannon above the roar and hiss of the storm. They quickened their efforts, knowing what it meant. It meant that a feint was being made against the walls on the cliff above them for the purpose of drawing the defenders thither, so that there would be less opposition in front of the main assault. The feint was in three bodies; one against the bastion on Cape Diamond, and the others against two of the gates in the fortifications.

The sound of the first shot had hardly been swept into distance by the furious gale before there was another, and another, followed closely by more discharges, which overlapped in a continuous crash. The English were well ready for their foe where their foe was not attacking. The soldiers below congratulated themselves on the way the plan was working out.

Above the seething of the storm, piercing the rumble of guns on the heights, their ears caught now and then, faintly, the tones of a bell ringing in wild alarm. Presently another bell answered it from one of the monasteries or convents; in brief minutes a dozen were crying with brazen throats into the storm, awakening the slumbering defenders with their startled outcry.

Louder and louder swelled the rumble of cannon and the rattle of musketry from the cliff over the heads of the devoted soldiers; madly and more madly pealed the bells, filling the night with weird alarm. Bravely along the weary way plunged the thin, shivering column, diving into the wind with heads down, paying no heed to freezing fingers and feet; to cheeks that grew solid and senseless in the blast. For the thing was working out as their leader had planned.

Where was Arnold all this time? They soon had their answer in a din of sudden battle that came swirling around the base of the cliff from Lower Town. Their hearts beat fast; they forgot their

misery as they heard the welcome sound. Arnold was doing his part; Arnold was at hand. They had only to press on. Victory seemed already assured.

It was a mad and glorious fight to which they were listening as they struggled forward. At the head of Arnold's column marched Daniel Morgan with his Virginia riflemen, followed by the men of Pennsylvania, dead shots all of them. Behind came the rest of the column, in long file, winding through the snow-drifts that filled the narrow way. In the van of the main body trudged three of the soldiers that had been passing the evening in the little farm cottage. They carried a scaling ladder on their shoulders, for use against the barriers with which the British had closed off the streets.

Morgan and his men, marching at the head of the column, with Arnold among them, saw something bulky and dark looming through the storm ahead. As they looked to see what it was, the center of the shadow leapt into vivid flame; there was a deafening crash; a rush of hot, pungent smoke, and a shot whizzed past. They had come upon the first barrier.

"Rally!" shouted Morgan. "Shoot them down at their guns."

Gathering swiftly in the black night, the riflemen leveled their pieces and fired where the flash had been. Their aim was lighted by the dull glow of the matches with which the guns were set off. Not one man showed himself within the fluttering circle of the wind-tossed light that was not stricken down by

a bullet from the riflemen. The guns were made useless.

But a British soldier, firing his musket from the top of the barrier, sent a ball which struck against the stone wall of a house, glanced, and plowed its way through Benedict Arnold's left knee. Leaning against a wall, Arnold continued to direct the fighting for a space; but loss of blood and the cold of the night quickly sapped his strength. He had to be supported and carried to the rear, leaving Morgan in command.

That huge knight, seizing the ladder which our three acquaintances brought up, placed it against the barrier and was over the top of it, followed by a swarm of men, pouring across the narrow bridge like ants. They rushed the English and Canadians from the space beyond, and dashed forward toward the second barrier.

It was this fighting to which the hurrying column of Montgomery listened eagerly as they crept along the road. To their left the black face of Cape Diamond disappeared in the swirling storm overhead; to their right the sullen frozen St. Lawrence River sent a pale reflection through the driven snow. Ahead was victory, or death.

They came to the first barrier that blocked their way. The sound of fighting on the cliffs behind them, diminishing, was swept away in the howling wind. The din of conflict in the Lower Town, where Arnold's column was in death grapple at the second

barrier, was slackening, as they rushed against the defense. Carpenters, pushing forward, fell to with their saws ; but Montgomery, impatient, thrust himself through between the posts and the wall of the cliff, setting the dog in the snow to care for himself.

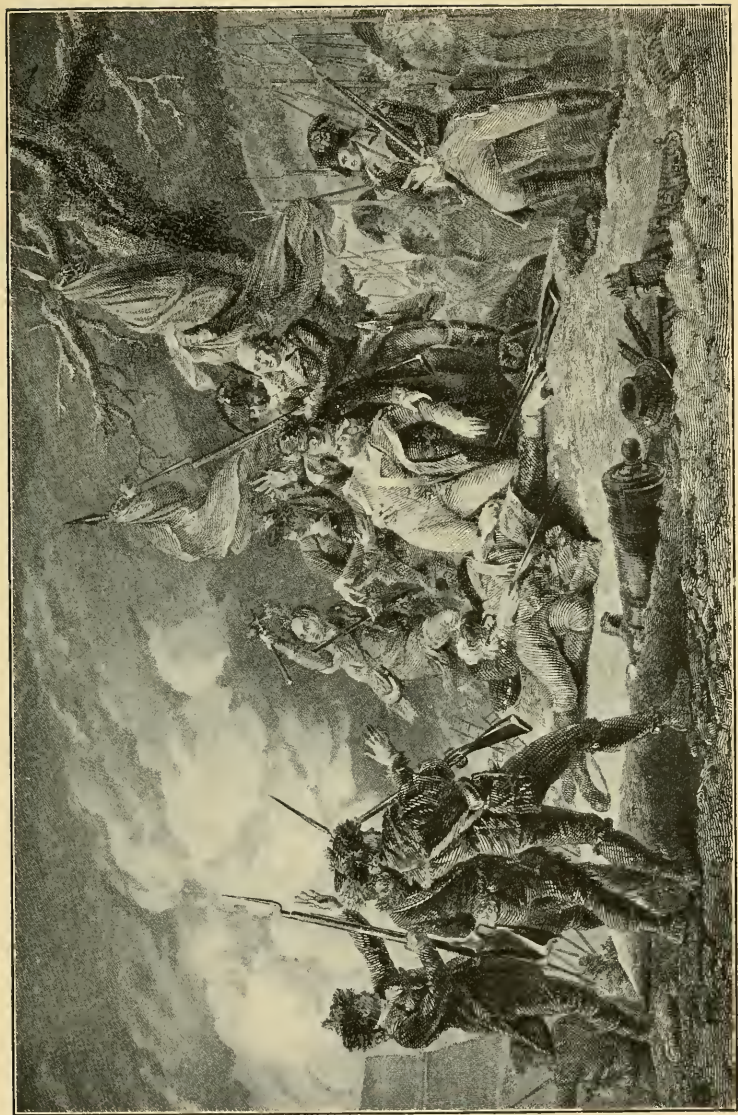
Others followed, and moved forward. Ahead of them a building beetled down upon them. They dashed upon it, seeing the lights of cannon matches wavering within it. Some English sailors were there. They had been drinking. Seeing the shadowy forms filling the space in front of them, they turned and fled.

But one drunken fellow, halting half-way across the room, turned back, with an oath, and touched off a gun. The act saved Canada. A blast of flame burst through the window, and grape-shot rushed swarming into the huddled group.

One man was down in the snow ; two, three. One of them, raising a forearm, waved his hand, shuddered, stiffened, and was still. It was the brave Montgomery.

Colonel Campbell, succeeding to the command, pushed aside the whining spaniel and leaned over the commander. Terror smote his heart when he saw that the leader was dead. He hesitated, wavered, lost courage, ordered a retreat.

Back along the weary way they had come, staggering before the driving snow, marched the soldiers, angry and sullen. They did not stop to lift the body of their fallen leader to their shoulders ; they



IT WAS THE BRAVE MONTGOMERY



did not stop to coax the wretched dog to come with them, but staggered on, defeated by their second in command, dejected, disheartened.

Oh, the pity of it! If they had pressed forward, Quebec would have been theirs. For at the moment when they turned away, Morgan and his men, joined by the rest of Arnold's column, was making a valiant stand against overwhelming numbers of the foe. Up and down before the barrier the fight raged. Morgan, a giant in body and soul, fought like a knight, slaying right and left with sword, pistol, and musket-butt.

Stricken down by fire that plunged into their midst from three directions, the men that had marched through the woods of Maine, that had dug roots from the ground with bleeding fingers and eaten them to maintain life, crumpled into the snow, freezing stiff in the contortions of their last agonies.

Morgan, seeing the fight going against him, led his men into a house, where they made a last stand. But the foe were too many. If Montgomery had not been killed; if Campbell had not been a coward, and the other column had come up then, all would have been well. But, freed from attack in other quarters, the British defenders poured down upon the stalwart band from all directions; overwhelmed them; swamped them in numbers. They climbed into the house through an upper window; cornered the Americans in the house that had sheltered them; compelled their surrender.

Morgan, defiant until the last, backed against a wall and would not give up until his soldiers prevailed upon him to save his life, when he handed his sword to a priest.

Thus ended the attack on Quebec. With victory in their grasp, conquerors of storm and numbered foe, they failed at the last because one man had faltered.

Out in the drifting snow under the huge brow of Cape Diamond a tiny bundle of fur shivered and whined, crouching beside the slim figure of a hero stiffened in death. Faithful through life, the wretched spaniel would not be comforted, but crouched there grieving, with his cold nose nuzzling the cold hand that nevermore would respond with affectionate stroke.

And when the British had buried his master where he had fallen, the beast still mourned upon the grave, reckless of wind and weather, ignoring hunger and need of warmth, until a Frenchman, a week later, carried him away to his own house and coaxed him to live.

CHAPTER IV

ONLY A BIT OF BUNTING

SEVEN or eight men sat under a palmetto tree next an arm of the Atlantic in the dusk of a June evening. They were rough looking men ; quite ill-looking fellows, on the whole. They were soiled and disheveled, showing the effects of a hot day spent in toil without benefit of water. Their hair was mussed ; stubbly beards covered their cheeks and chins ; their homespun clothing was loosened at throat and wrists for whatever cool breeze might steal off the surface of the lazy waters of the inlet.

They formed a little straggling circle, in the center of which a few sticks and leaves raised a smudge, with a tiny blaze shooting this way and that among the ribbons of smoke. On the fire was a steaming vessel, giving out the odor of coffee. A round-bottomed saucepan balanced precariously on a stone at the edge of the fire. A chicken, dressed and drawn, hung suspended over it on a stick. The men were waiting for their evening meal.

Behind them, against the palmetto tree, leaned a cluster of long-barreled, polished muskets, of odd shapes and sizes. Their burnished appearance and a certain smoothness about the stock and shanks of

the guns showed that they were well used weapons, and no strangers to the hands that had laid them there. Among the butts of the guns, on the ground, were bullet pouches and powder-horns, together with a crude knapsack or two.

At a distance from the men, pacing close to the edge of the water, with a musket over his shoulder, was another man. From time to time he paused to gaze across the inlet to where the opposite shore, a mile away, was disappearing in the gloaming. He peered long and sharply each time, as though intent on seeing what was going on across the water. At intervals he turned back toward the group near the fire, to call out an impatient question about the supper.

The men were a squad detached from Colonel Thompson's South Carolina militia, stationed on Sullivan's Island, in Charleston harbor, to support the erection of a fort on the island intended to prevent the approach to the city of a fleet of British war vessels that had lately appeared, bent on mischief. The time was late June, in the year 1775. The English, making no headway against the patriots in Massachusetts, had sent thousands of redcoats in fifty ships against the province of South Carolina, hoping to restore loyalty there.

In this they had more than failed. Although there were many in the interior of the state whose hearts had been with the king in the beginning, most of these had been turned away by an attempt on the

part of the British governor to raise the Indians in a frontier warfare, and now that an invading force had appeared these had sent militia to join the patriots of the coast in a defense of their principal seaport. Virginia, too, had sent troops, and there was a regiment of Pennsylvania riflemen, under General John Armstrong, on the ground.

Charles Lee, a soldier of fortune from Europe, who had fought in Continental wars, and who had thrown in his lot with the Americans in the hope of gaining fame and position, was in command. At that time his purpose had not been guessed by the patriots, and they welcomed him as a hero, with the glamour of a European reputation behind him. Under him were General Armstrong, Colonel Thompson, and Colonel William Moultrie.

General Clinton, in command of the British troops, had landed 3,000 men on Long Island some days before, expecting to cross to Sullivan's Island over a ford and drive the Americans from the uncompleted work. But when they were ready to make the advance, they found that there was no ford, and Clinton contented himself with encamping on Long Island, which was nothing but a barren sandspit.

It was Long Island that the sentinel was watching who was tramping up and down next the water a few paces from the little group. At each turn he could see the masts of the British ships, transports and men-of-war, lying within the bar ; a beautiful, threatening sight, with their forest of masts and spars

lined against the flush that spread in the eastern sky from the setting sun. Perhaps he shook his head more than once over the formidable array of force.

But evidently he was more interested in supper, for he left his post for a moment presently and trudged through the sand to the fire. "Smoked chicken?" he grumbled. "Smoked chicken? Is that what you're tryin' to cook over yon fire? If not, why don't you put on some wood?"

"Patience, Stephen," laughed one of the men, who seemed to be the cook. "Ain't the night hot enough without building up a great fire to show the bloody-backs where we are in case they take a fancy to fire a shot at us? The chicken'll be done, and likewise the potatoes, soon enough. Do you keep to your post, and leave us to mind our affairs with the victuals."

"'Tis all well enough to tell me to stick to my post, but 'tis not so pleasant doing it with my waistcoat sticking to my backbone for the lack of something hot in my stomach," retorted the sentry.

"Something hot, is it?" laughed another. "You are like to have something hot on the morrow in the shape of a British cannon-ball, so what's the odds now, a bite of chicken or two? 'Twould be a waste of good food, say I, to cram a man who is like to be shot on the morrow."

"Then speak for yourself," snapped Stephen, taking up his gun again and moving back toward the

water, "for you are as like as the next to be fed on British iron ; although 'tis more likely, to my way of thinking, that you will have it in the back than in the stomach."

There was a burst of rough mirth at the jest, which was taken in good part by the victim of it, there being no room for doubt that he was as brave in fight as any of them.

"To-morrow's the day, then, think you?" said a soldier, when the laugh had died out.

"Nay, we can only guess as to that," replied the one to whom he spoke. "For my part, I am puzzled to see why the British have not struck long ago. 'Tis now nigh a month since their fifty ships came into our waters, and they have done little more than come inside the bar, and land a handful of troops on a sand-bar, where they can go neither one way nor t' other."

"We ought to thank our lucky stars for that, for if they had struck at once they would have found us but ill-prepared to withstand them in a half-finished fort."

"And a half-finished fort it is still, when you come to that," spoke a voice from behind the palmetto where their guns rested.

The men started up at sound of it, and peered through the smoke of their fire to see who it was that came on them so unexpectedly.

"Ah, Sergeant Jasper!" cried one of the number, perceiving the face of the newcomer, as he ap-

proached the fire. "What's afoot? What news of the fort, then?"

"Little news, except that it grows; but it still has a long way to grow," replied Sergeant Jasper, coming to a stand in the thickest part of the smoke. "All day long have I been shouldering palmetto logs into place, and filling behind them with sand. One of the traverses was found to be tottering weak as an old man. But the platforms are ready, and the front walls stout, so that, with the help of God, we may hope to give a good account of ourselves."

"For my part," quoth one of the number, "I think Colonel Moultrie, if I may make so bold, blundered when he seized upon the palmetto for his walls. 'Tis well known that the wood is as soft as sponges, and what chance has it against the solid balls of the enemy's guns?"

"The best chance in life," returned Jasper. "The iron balls will only sink into the soft wood, without cracking or splitting it, so that the more balls the enemy lodge there, the stronger will be the wall, for it will be made of iron, my man."

"What brings you, Sergeant Jasper?" asked another, jovially.

"I have had my fill of working shoulder to shoulder with negroes from the plantations, and I came to seek a clean breath with a white man," replied the man from the fort.

"Draw out of the smoke, then, and take pot luck with us. We have a fine plump hen which came our

way this afternoon to make a sacrifice of herself on the altar of liberty ; and, since you have been so much with the negroes to-day, you shall have a bit of the breast, which is good white meat, if there ever was any."

The remark passed current for a merry quip. Sergeant Jasper, laughing quietly, withdrew from the smoke of the fire, where he had sought shelter from the mosquitoes that were beginning to buzz, and sat down with the others, while the one who acted as cook drew the chicken from its spit and cut away chunks of it with a dagger, passing the bits around to his comrades on the point of the weapon.

"Think you they will begin the ball to-morrow, Sergeant Jasper?" a soldier asked, as they ate.

"That who can tell?" replied the other. "They have waited well-nigh thirty days, from which we should argue that they will wait no longer, or that they will wait thirty more."

"If it were not for biding another month in this dog's hole of an island, I could well wish it was the latter," observed one.

"Why so? You like not the prospect of a fight, then?"

"Aye, merrily, I like that well enough. But I would rather that the fort was well ready first."

"Have no fear for the fort; it will be ready enough."

"Aye, but the bridge," spoke up another. "What of the bridge? It is scarcely well begun yet; which

is to say, the new one, for the other was of no value, as was well shown when General Armstrong sent two hundred men along it, and it sank with them to their necks."

"Who talks of bridge?" cried Jasper, indignantly. "What bridge would you have?"

"Why, a bridge to the mainland, to be sure. Else how can we retreat? We shall be cut off like a fox in a fence, else."

"We shall have no need to retreat!" cried Jasper. "If you are so bent upon making yourself safe, you would best be off before the fun begins."

"Nay, not so," returned the other. "I am as willing to stand up as the next man. But 'tis no more than good military tactics to have a road for retreat, in case something untoward happens. All good generals say as much, and Lee himself has more than once pressed upon Colonel Moultrie to build a bridge."

"We shall have no need of a bridge," Jasper insisted. "And as for General Lee, were it not an uncivil thing to speak so of your commanding officer, I should say that he was like a frightened old woman in this whole matter. He has a fear of redcoats which, thanks be to God, is not shared by us who are going to fight against them. He believes that we shall make but a poor showing against them, having told Colonel Moultrie more than once that we cannot hold out; and were it not for John Rutledge, our sturdy governor, he would have had us with-

drawn from here long ere this, and the enemy would even now be making merry in our streets, belike."

"Aye, so they would; and did you hear what passed between him and Moultrie but a few days back?" interposed one of the group.

"What was that?"

"Why, the general said, said he: 'When those ships lay alongside this fort they will knock it down in half an hour.' 'Then,' said Moultrie, 'we will lie behind the ruins and prevent their men from landing.'"

"Well said, and a brave speech, and so we will," shouted a militiaman.

"Aye, if there be any ruin," Jasper agreed. "But there will be none," he went on.

"How many ships may they have to bring against us? Is it known?"

"Seven, I think. Two of them, the *Bristol* on which Commodore Peter Parker commands, and the *Experiment* are of fifty guns. The others are lighter ships, and will give no trouble."

The talk was interrupted by the arrival of the sentry, who had been down the sand a few rods to investigate a noise which he thought he had heard in the water. "Now, then!" he cried, "is the supper ready yet?"

"Aye, ready, and eaten, but you may have a bone to keep company with that cannon-ball for which you have whetted your appetite this night," answered the camp cook, holding toward him the bare re-

mains of the bird. "And here is a slice of potato to keep the bird in victuals while it is waiting," he went on, holding up the round-bottomed saucepan, in which a few scraps of sweet potatoes still remained.

Stephen, in a great rage, was for giving the cook a cuff, but was prevented by another soldier, who had saved aside the sentry's share, and now presented it to him with a good laugh all round.

"Why they picked out this pest hole to build a fort in is more than I can see," observed one of the men, when quiet had returned. "There is a swamp in the very center of the works, and such a jungle of palmettos and underbrush all about that one can scarcely find his way without sinking into a bog or being bitten by a moccasin."

"Or a mosquito, which doubtless is as evil for your way of thinking," retorted Sergeant Jasper, pulling out his pipe and filling it. "Forts are not built like houses, according to the beauty of the site," he went on, after a pause in which he had lighted his pipe with the coal end of one of the brands in the fire. "You build a fort where it is necessary to build a fort, and not where it will look pretty, or where the living is nice. And as for this fort, it could not be in a better place to control the harbor; for, look you, no fleet could get to the city without passing us. And still, your friend Charles Lee was for having us clear out and leave the ground for the enemy!"

"Let us hope his fears are not on good ground," returned the soldier, who felt that a defense of the commander-in-chief had been thrust upon him. "If we are all cut off, it will be through no fault of his."

"It will be through fault of ours," retorted Jasper. "There is only one thing I fear."

"And what is that?"

"I fear there is not enough powder in the fort. But for all that," he went on, rising to go, "we shall do the best we can, and shall render a good account of ourselves, never fear. And perhaps another day will read the riddle. So good-night, my lads, and a soft sleep for all of you. I must back to the fort."

Leaving one man to keep watch of the water-side, and throw grass and mold on the fire from time to time to smudge out the mosquitoes, which had become more and more annoying as the evening settled, the others drew their blankets about them and lay down in the drift of the smoke to sleep. The sound of busy laborers at the fort came to their drowsy ears as they passed into slumber.

All night long the work continued, as it had for many days and nights. Those in the fort knew that not many days would be left them in which to make preparation. They had done much, the fort was already stout and thick; but there were many last touches which they wished to give it.

They were still at work on it the next morning, the morning of June 28th, when Sergeant Jasper, who had climbed to the top of the parapet to set free the

flag, which had become entangled with the halliards, called out to Colonel Moultrie that the enemy appeared to be making ready to move.

Clambering up beside him, with three or four officers, Moultrie beheld little blossoms of white breaking out on the lofty yards of the men-of-war; saw the blossoms blow into great tossing flowers of sail, saw the sails being sheeted home. Over the water, borne on the breeze which came from the ships, they heard the chantey of sailors heaving anchor, and the orders of mates shouted through trumpets to the sailors aloft and aloft. It was quite true that the enemy were active; but whether they were coming against the fort, or bent on some other expedition, remained to be seen.

Moultrie, however, was not going to take any chances. He glanced up at the flagstaff to make sure that the flag was all right. It was nothing but a bit of blue bunting, on which had been sewn a white crescent; but it meant much. It meant, floating there at the top of the staff, all that they were fighting for. It meant to them liberty, and freedom, and human rights.

"Is the flag all right, sergeant?" he asked.

"All right, sir," replied Sergeant Jasper.

"Good," said Moultrie, and clambered down into the work again.

Five minutes later the last batch of negro laborers had been withdrawn from working on the walls, and the garrison was bustling to its post. Cannon

matches were lighted ; guns were loaded ; balls were brought and laid beside the pieces ; powder was stored in small quantities under the platforms where the guns stood, ready for quick speech if the enemy came that way. Soldiers and sailors—there were many sailors in the fort who had enlisted when the British closed the sea to them by blockading the port—stripped themselves of their coats and shirts, ready for a warm fight. For the June sun was already burning hot in the sky, and the moist sea air was sweltering.

Sergeant Jasper served at one of the guns on the sea front of the fort. The embrasure of the gun, through which it pointed at the enemy, was near the flagstaff, and was therefore likely to be more exposed to the fire of the enemy than the others. That is probably one reason why Sergeant Jasper was placed there ; for his courage and coolness were well known. He was the sort of young fellow that every one depended on, without knowing quite why ; often without knowing that they did depend on him.

As he stood by his gun, looking through the embrasure at the British fleet, he was fascinated by the sight. The great white sails billowed and filled high above the hulls of the ships. He could see the rows of guns, grim-muzzled, thrust through the ports ; not a reassuring sight, when one thought they would soon be throwing iron balls at him. The fifty-gun ships looked huge enough to topple the fort over in

one blast. Jasper had never been shot at by a cannon before; he found himself wondering how it would seem.

Any doubt about the intentions of Sir Peter Parker did not long remain. The vessels, swinging for a moment in the wind, caught the breeze in their sails and came floating down toward the fort, scarcely bobbing to the low swell swung in from the sea. A tension ran through the garrison; men tightened their belts and wiped their mouths nervously. The man next to Jasper heaved an unconscious sigh. The sergeant, smiling, laid a hand on his bare shoulder. "We'll give it to them pretty soon, lad," he said. The other smiled back; his face was white and drawn with excitement.

Slowly, steadily, the vessels drew near. There was not a sound ashore. Over the water there came the call of boatswains giving orders for the trimming of the sails. Now the gunners in the fort could see the men on deck, standing at their cannon. Now they could see their laces, gazing eagerly at the palmetto wall. Now they could see the planking in the vessels' sides; now they could see the ropes coiled on the belaying pins.

Four hundred yards from the fort the sails vanished from the yards like a cloud scattered by the wind. There was a splashing of water about the bows of each ship, and the grumble of anchor chains running out through hawse-holes. For a space the vessels drifted, bringing up in line, broadside on,

held in position by spring-lines fastened to the anchor cables.

There was a tense moment of silence. A puff of smoke leaped from a forward gun on the *Bristol*, Commodore Parker's flag-ship. The sound of a shot rolled across the narrow strip of water, and a ball went howling overhead. The echo of the shot had not died alongshore when the entire British fleet burst into flaming smoke, and the air shook with the heavy discharge of the broadside.

It seemed to Sergeant Jasper for a moment that the end of the fort was at hand. The gun platform shook and trembled under the heavy blow of the hurtling shot. In the next moment he saw that no harm had been done. The iron balls had merely imbedded themselves in the palmetto logs, jarring loose little rivulets of sand here and there, but dislodging nothing important.

He did not stop for an order to fire ; he did not wait to see what others were doing. Springing to the breech of the cannon, he dragged the trail to the right, bringing the piece in line with the commodore's flag-ship, trained it, and nodded to the matchman. The match swung down through the air against the primer ; there was a lurch and a roar, a swift spout of smoke, and the shot went skimming across the water.

"A hit!" cried one of the gun crew, running forward with a swab to clean out the gun. "I saw splinters."

"You've the eyes of a salamander, then, to see through such smoke," laughed Jasper; for the British fleet was already enveloped in the smoke from their own guns, which left only their spars and top hamper visible behind swinging wraiths of gray cloud.

"Steady all," spoke a voice behind them. "Take your time, and make every shot count. Aim at the two fifty-gun ships; let the others go." It was Colonel Moultrie, walking up and down behind the parapet, cool as a farmer bossing a threshing gang. His pipe was in his mouth, and his hands under the tails of his coat, which he had kept on, despite the heat, for the sake of military appearances.

The fire of the British vessels was rapid and incessant. Each second the dull thump of a ball sounded against the soft logs out in front, and the air was laced with their black traces across the sky. "They've got powder to waste, my lads, and let them waste it," cried Jasper, with a laugh. "As for us, we'll make it count. Steady and slow is the word, boys. No hurry. We'll blow them out of the water by degrees."

Steady and slow was the word. To the constant roar of the fleet's guns the cannon in the fort answered deliberately, calmly, pounding away like a man with a heavy sledge. The air was full of the din of cannon and the softer thump of British shot against the works. The first nervousness had worn off; the Americans no longer feared the shot of the

enemy. Now and then the ripping noise of one of their shot tearing through the oak bulwarks came down the wind to give them heart in their work.

Sergeant Jasper was growing warm. The heat of the sun was enough, without the heat of his task, and the burning powder added to the temperature. "Let her cool down, boys," he said, after a time, laying his hand on the breech of the piece.

The crew squatted behind the bulwarks, laughing and discussing the effects of their shot. Jasper, removing his coat, which he had retained out of respect to his office, pulled out his pipe, filled it, and began to smoke.

"Look, look!" cried one of the men, peeping through the embrasure, just as Jasper was blowing great clouds of smoke from his nostrils in enjoyment of his tobacco.

Glancing through the opening, he saw that the *Bristol* was swinging round in the tide.

"Quick," he cried. "Load, men, load for your lives. We've cut her cables. Quick, and we'll rake her."

They flew about their task, ramming home the powder.

"Grape!" shouted Jasper. "Give 'em grape."

The grape was sent home.

The *Bristol*, swinging slowly and helplessly in the tide, presented her bow to the fort. Jasper leaned over his gun, squinted along the barrel, and nodded. "Now, give it to her!" he exclaimed.

The gun leapt like a dog springing at a throat. A dozen others spoke at the same time. As the smoke cleared away, Jasper peered out. The *Bristol*, being end on, could not fire, and the breeze had swept her decks clear of smoke. Jasper could see the havoc that had been wrought. Men were running about the flag-ship's decks in consternation. Ropes were dangling from their blocks; several yards came down with a run; the maintopmast, tottering like a sick man, plunged overside and speared down into the water, dragging with it a mess of cordage.

"Quick!" cried Jasper. "Give her another!"

They gave her another, and another, before the British sailors, bending new springs upon their cables, swung the ship back into position.

"Huzza! Huzza!" shouted the men in the fort, seeing the mischief they had wrought on board the commodore's vessel.

At that moment evil word spread through the ranks. Somebody whispered that Clinton's redcoats were crossing in boats from Long Island to attack the fort in the rear. The men working at the guns looked at each other, disheartened for the moment.

"Never mind them," said Jasper, aiming his piece again. "The Pennsylvania boys will take care of them. We've our own work to do."

The fight had not gone much farther when a cry of alarm went up from the right bastion of the fort. Three of the British vessels, slipping along under

cover of the smoke, were seen emerging from the end of the British line and making for the rear of the works, where the walls had not been completed.

If they gained that position it would go hard with the defenses. There were few guns there, and those in position were poorly protected. The enemy would be able to pour in a cross fire ; perhaps they would be able to clear the gun platforms.

Jasper, seeing the danger, swung his gun, but it would not bear. The embrasure was too narrow to permit him to bring it far enough to one side. He let fall an exclamation of annoyance, and stood watching the result of the maneuver.

As he looked he gave a cry of delight. "They've fouled!" he shouted. "They've fouled! They've made a mess of it."

It was true. Two of the ships were stuck together, the bowsprit of one interlacing with the rigging of the other's mainmast. Men were already busy, under what fire could be brought to bear, chopping away the bowsprit. They had no time now to fight ; the helpless vessels were drifting with the tide.

"And the other is aground!" shouted Jasper, with delight.

She had ceased to move, although the wind still filled her sails and the tide ran strong about her stern, urging her on. She was fast on a bar.

"They're done for," said Jasper. "We'll go out and take possession of 'em this afternoon, when the

others have had enough. If they don't take care, they'll all be in the same fix."

All this time the fire from the other British ships had not slackened, and the hail of iron missiles still rattled against the logs. But the Americans did not mind it in the least any more. They worked their guns quietly, without hurry, taking careful aim, and firing at long intervals, preserving their powder. The end was almost certain now. Unless Clinton managed to get ashore with his troops and take the fort in the rear, the British were as good as whipped.

An hour passed, and no word of Clinton. The dread of him was on the minds of all, but no one showed his dread. Colonel Moultrie, with his officers, loitered about within the fort, going hither and yon with a word of praise and courage for the fighting men, making a holiday of it.

It was no holiday on the British ship. Nearly every shot from the fort found its mark. The decks were strewn with the mangled dead; shrieks of anguish arose from the cockpits, where the surgeons tended the wounded. Spars were rattling down from aloft, cut by the deadly fire of the patriots. The tops were not habitable; the marines had been withdrawn after the first few minutes of fire. Great holes were opening up in the hulls; carpenters were busy making repairs, and sailors were bending to the pumps. Sir Peter Parker was below in the hands of the surgeons, with one arm gone. The commander

of the *Experiment*, the other fifty-gun ship, was in similar case. All was merry in the fort.

But not so merry! What was the meaning of that cry of disappointment and dismay that pierced the heavy reverberation of the guns? Why that shout of anger that arose from the throats of half the garrison, spreading among them like a wind among pine-needles in a mountain forest?

A glance showed Sergeant Jasper what was wrong. Up on the parapet, where the bit of bunting with a crescent on blue ground had been floating serenely all this time, there was nothing left but a shattered stump of a flagstaff. The flag was nowhere to be seen.

The British on board the ship had observed the mishap. They were setting up a shout of victory; they believed the enemy had struck.

"Where's the flag?" demanded Jasper, his face setting in a look of determination.

"In the ditch," answered one of the gunners. "It fell outside."

Before any one was aware of what he was about, Jasper had clambered through the embrasure and sprung into the ditch. The fire in the fort ceased; men stood at their guns craning their necks and straining their eyes, watching for him to come back.

But the fire in the British ships did not slacken. It increased; it redoubled. The air seemed solid with the swarm of shot that rushed upon the fort. It

seemed that no man could live through such an iron storm. Those in the fort deplored the mad recklessness that had led Sergeant Jasper out into it. Everybody liked Jasper ; they exchanged condolences with each other over him.

Still, they waited, hoping against hope that he would return. None dared peer over the works to see how he fared ; the fire was too fierce and deadly. They only waited, staring at the place where he had gone.

A hand, appearing above the edge of the parapet, clutched over a log. Another hand took place alongside. In the second hand was something blue ; a bit of bunting.

Another instant, and the tousled head of Sergeant Jasper emerged from behind the parapet, and was lifted higher and higher. Presently one elbow crooked ; a leg flew up and curled over the top log ; the body of the sergeant appeared ; clambered to the top, and stood upright. He had climbed the logs on the face of the wall, as you climb a fence.

He looked about, saw the stump of the flagstaff, and walked up to it, cool as a school-teacher. The air was thick with screaming shot. He paid no heed. He reached the staff, examined it, spread out the flag, and shook his head.

"Pass me up a swab," he said, quietly, to one of the gunners at his own gun.

The man handed him the cannon sponge. Without the least haste, Jasper took it, stretched the edge

of the flag along the staff of it, studied for a moment, and shook his head again. He could not make out the best way to fasten it.

Presently, before the eyes of the entire garrison and all the men on the British vessels, he began to twist the halliards around the shaft of the sponge, tied a couple of knots, tested them with a pull at the bit of bunting, found them good, and shook his head again. The air was alive with yelling cannon-balls; it seemed to those who watched that he must be knocked into the sky the next instant.

Shaking the bit of bunting to the breeze as he went, he walked to the edge of the parapet, thrust the end of the sponge staff into the sand, straightened it, bore down heavily on it, gave it a shake to see that it was firm, walked back to the embrasure of his gun, and slid to the platform. "Come, now, load up," he said, easily. "You're wasting time."

A great shout went up from the fort, answered by a huzza from the ships. Anglo-Saxon blood could not witness such a deed, even on the part of an enemy, and remain silent. It was the involuntary tribute of brave men for a brave act.

Sergeant Jasper, trying to hide a look of conscious pride, bent over his gun and sighted it again.

When he straightened up, a hand was laid on his arm, and he turned to look into the sparkling eyes of Colonel Moultrie. "Bravo, Jasper, bravo!" cried his commander.

That was all; but that was enough.

"What news of Clinton?" asked the sergeant, avoiding an embarrassing subject.

Moultrie grinned. "He didn't try it," he replied. "Got half of his men in boats, and took them out again."

"Remembers Bunker Hill, I reckon," commented the sergeant.

"I reckon," was all that Moultrie said, as he turned away to see how things went elsewhere.

There is no need to tell more. All through the long day, and until evening spread over the waters, the fight went on as it had gone on from the beginning, with the British suffering fearfully from the well-aimed shots of the patriots, and the Americans scarcely touched. Only one gun was dismounted; and but a score of men killed and wounded. If the powder had held out the British fleet must inevitably have been destroyed or captured, for they were caught where they were, unable to stir until evening because of wind and tide. They could only fight hopelessly. As it was, when they finally withdrew, only one of the ten vessels was fit for sea. The *Bristol* had lost two masts and was full of shot holes; the *Experiment* had fared little better. The *Acteon*, the one that had gone aground in the effort to come up on the flank of the fort, was burned by the British that night. As soon as they could make ready for sea, the British fleet left Charleston, together with the transports carrying the regulars,

and for two years no British were seen in those parts.

As for Jasper ; there are many more things that might be told of him—how he harried the foe through many days and nights as one of Marion's men, performing numerous brave deeds, and winning a name up and down, among friends and foes, that any one might envy—but it is all another story. It was the adventure with the bit of bunting that has made him famous, and that will keep him so as long as young Americans are proud of their country and the courageous struggle that gained it for their heritage.

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOLMASTER

MOTHER JOHNSON propped herself up in bed on an elbow and poked her sleeping husband. "William," she said. "William! There's somebody at the door."

William Johnson turned heavily. "Can't be, at this time of night," he grunted.

"I tell you there is," his wife insisted. "Listen."

The sound of a loud knocking echoed through the house. Johnson sat up abruptly. "Some drunken redcoat from the Widow Chick's, I reckon," he grumbled. "I'll fix him."

He tumbled out of bed and fumbled about for his clothes.

"Be careful what you do, William," pleaded Mrs. Johnson. "Don't get the British soldiers down on us, whatever you do."

"Oh, you leave that to me," rejoined her goodman, a bit sharply, not pleased to be turned out of his bed at that time of night.

The knocking was repeated.

"Hold your noise, can't you?" shouted William, through the window. "Can't you see that I'm coming as fast as I can?"

Anybody might have known that the stranger at

the door could not have seen through three walls and a floor, even if it had been broad daylight, instead of three o'clock in the morning, but Johnson was not in a humor to consider little circumstances like that.

"I beg your pardon," came a low, firm voice from the front of the house. "I thought you hadn't heard me."

It was neither the voice nor the manner of a drunken soldier. Johnson, prompted by curiosity, poked his head through the window for a view of the one who had got him out of bed. "What do you want here at this time of night?" he demanded, a bit annoyed at having his guess proved false. He could see nothing but the shadow of a man at the front door.

"I want a bed, sir, if you will be so good," came the response.

"Why don't you go to the Widow Chick's, then?" growled Johnson. "She keeps a tavern for travelers three-quarters of a mile up the road."

"I've just been there," the other replied. "She has no room. She sent me here, sir. If you would be so good as to admit me for the rest of the night I shall be under heavy obligations, and shall repay you as well as I can in money."

Farmer Johnson hesitated.

"Sounds like a nice voice, William," submitted Mrs. Johnson, sitting up in bed to listen. "Maybe he'd pay us handsome."

"Don't like it, howsomever," snapped Johnson, drawing his head in and going on with his dressing. "Something's wrong, mark my word. No self-respecting, law-abiding citizen is going around the country at this time of night looking for a bed to sleep in. But if you insist, I'll risk my neck and see what he wants."

"You can't tell much about things in these times of war," his wife endeavored to console him. "Things is so irregular now, with the British running all over Long Island, and nobody knowing who's a friend and who's a foe."

"Shut your head, will you?" jerked Johnson. "What are you blabbin' about friend and foe for, when everybody is our friend, and nobody is our foe?"

"I'm sorry, William," she apologized. "I didn't mean no harm, and nobody could have heard me."

"You can't tell who's hearing you, with the whole country overrun with spies and informers. Who's to know that this isn't one of them down at the door now? Yes, yes, I'm comin'! Hold your horses, can't you?" This last shouted toward the window, in response to another timid knock that sounded on the door.

"I beg your pardon, sir," spoke the stranger. "I didn't know whether you had decided to let me in or not, and thought from your silence that you were going to exclude me from the shelter of your home."

"Talks fine, doesn't he?" observed Mrs. Johnson, admiringly. "Wonder if he's an officer. Maybe it's a general, William. Maybe it's General Howe himself!" she concluded, her voice rising with the climax in her guessing.

"Likely 'tis!" snarled Johnson, sarcastically. "Maybe it's King George! . . . Well, good-bye, and if the fellow chooses to shoot me through and run off with all there is in the house, you'll have only yourself to thank for making me let him in."

With which gracious speech William Johnson, snatching a candle from the mantel-shelf, left the room and made off down the stairs, holding his half-buttoned clothes about him as he went. He stopped in the kitchen on the way, to light his candle in the coals still smouldering on the hearth, and approached the front door at last with great caution, holding the fluttering flame high above his head and peering into the panels of the door as though he would have seen through them to make certain of the character of the midnight visitor before throwing the portal open to him.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he demanded again, as he laid finger on the latch.

"I've just come over from the mainland," replied the visitor. "I am in search of employment, but I don't know the way well, and if you could put me up, sir, until morning, I should be greatly obliged."

"You hain't got a gun, have ye?" queried Johnson, doubtfully.

"No weapon of any kind, I assure you," laughed the other.

"You mustn't mind my being careful," apologized the farmer, relenting to the soft voice of the traveler. "In these times of war, with the country full of red-coats, a man must look out for himself."

"I understand. . . . Pray let me in. It is rather chilly out here, although it is still September."

"All right, sir," quoth Johnson. With that he threw the latch and swung the door wide.

As he did so a gust of wind swept through the opening, fluttering the candle and at last snatching the flame from the wick, leaving them both in darkness. In the brief view he had had of the stranger the farmer saw a man a little above the average height, well built, straight, erect, dressed in the velvet knickers and black velvet coat of a schoolmaster, with white lace at the cuffs and throat, and a broad-brimmed black felt hat on his head. Although his appearance was reassuring, Johnson slammed the door hurriedly in his face while he ran off to get another light. He was taking no chances.

He was rather ashamed of his action, however, on second thought, and was full of explanations when he returned with the lighted candle. "The door must have blown shut," he protested. "Just come right into the kitchen, and I'll poke up the fire a bit for ye. 'Tis right sharp out, and that's a fact. Had no idea the nights were getting so cold." He rattled on in this strain as he led the stranger into the kitchen.

"We are like to have an early winter, and a severe one," observed the traveler, making himself at home in an armchair near the fire.

"Hard on the soldiers," returned Johnson, bustling about. "Will you care for a glass of rum or spirits? There is some fine old cider in the woodshed."

His guest refused. "Isn't that rather a risky place to keep cider, with soldiers all about?" he laughed.

Johnson, giving the fire three or four lusty pokes, leered at him shrewdly. "If any of 'em find where I hid it, they're welcome to it," he chuckled. "Would you like a bite to eat?"

"To tell you the truth, I am hungry, and if you can find me a snack of something it would be grateful," confessed the traveler. "But do not put yourself to any inconvenience."

Johnson looked at the clock. "I'll call my woman," he said. "Half-past three now; time to get up in another hour, anyway."

In spite of the schoolmaster's considerate protests the farmer cried out up the stairs for his wife to dress and come down; which she did with a celerity that suggested that she had for some time been making preparations to descend.

"From the mainland, be ye?" quizzed Johnson, when his wife was bustling about getting a breakfast for their visitor.

"Yes; Connecticut."

"Aha! How's things over there?"

"How do you mean, sir?" returned the schoolmaster, pretending not to understand. "What things do you mean?"

"Oh, just things. What do the people think about it all?"

"They are pretty much excited; they are all stirred up."

"Aha. Are they for us, or against us?"

The schoolmaster smiled. "That depends upon whom we are for, and against," he fenced.

"Of course; of course. But I guess you know what I mean, don't you? You are loyal, ain't you?"

"I left Connecticut by night and stole across the sound because my known views and sympathies were beginning to make it inconvenient, if not impossible, for me to remain there," replied the stranger. "I came to Long Island in order to be near the British, and under their protection, if necessary."

"Soho!" whistled Johnson. "Well, you have come to a good place. The woods are full of 'em here."

"They are encamped near here, I understand?" queried the other.

"Five miles south of here, and up at the Cedars. Thousands of them. You'll find plenty of 'em any night at Widow Chick's, hard by here; and others who are friends, howbeit they are not soldiers in the army."

"Loyalists?"

"Aye; loyalists, and a plenty of 'em. Wife and I, we're loyalists, but we don't mix much, finding it better to mind our own affairs as much as we can, as we never know when Washington may be back here with his regiments to make things lively for those who have been too kind to the British."

"Small chance of that, I fancy," returned the schoolmaster. "If reports are true, Washington is in straitened circumstances along the Hudson, above New York."

"In a bad fix, is he?"

"I couldn't say that. He has many thousand men determined to fight to the death, all well armed and drilled, but since their defeat on Long Island they have lacked spirit, in spite of the absurd manifesto that their Continental Congress put out on July 4th."

"You mean what they call the Declaration of Independence?"

"Yes."

"Washington is a sly one, though, isn't he?" Johnson went on, his eyes lighting up. "The way he slipped away from General Howe when Howe thought he had him boxed up on Long Island Heights was something rich, in a way, even if we did want to see him bagged."

"Aye, and he is quite likely to repeat the performance, unless Howe moves quickly," the schoolmaster returned. "Why doesn't Howe move?"

What is he contemplating, that he does not strike at once, and for all?"

"You'll have to ask Howe," said Johnson, shaking his head.

The serving of breakfast, piping hot, put an end to their talk. The schoolmaster, falling to with a right good appetite, had soon disposed of his food, and asked to be shown to his bed. "You might call me a couple of hours after sunrise, if you will," he said, when Johnson left him.

The longer the stranger slept, the more Johnson wondered over the adventure of his coming there in the middle of the night, saying that he was looking for occupation. What manner of occupation should a stranger be looking for in a country torn with civil war? he puzzled. There was something strange behind it all; something that Johnson wanted very much to ferret out, to satisfy a rustic curiosity. The two hours which he allowed his guest for sleep after sunrise were cut rather short because of this curiosity.

But when he pressed the man with questions, the most he could get out of him was that he wanted to find a school to teach in some loyal district, where he would not be compelled to utter doctrines offensive to his views of the struggle then going on between the colonies and the mother country. The fact looked reasonable enough on the surface, but behind it all, in the manner of the schoolmaster's answers, in his avoiding anything definite about his

former employments, and in the circumstance that he had not mentioned his name, although pointedly asked for it more than once, Johnson saw much that set him to scratching his head in thought. He was half minded to follow the fellow when he finally took his leave, and would have done so, if there had not been matters of importance demanding his attention in the hay-field. But by dinner time he had so far swung back toward an easier view of the experience that the chatter of his wife, upon whom the stranger's gracious manners and genteel speech had made an impression, quite disarmed him of any suspicion.

If he had followed the schoolmaster whom he had entertained mysteriously over night, he would have seen a number of things which would not only have quickened all his doubts, but would have put him in some fear because of his own connection, however innocent it was, with the stranger. For the well-knit young man in the black hat and knickers had no more than got out of sight along the road than he stopped, glanced slyly up and down to see that he was not observed, crawled through a broken rail fence, and struck out across hills and pastures southward, in the direction of the British camp five miles away.

Now and then, as he traveled, the schoolmaster stopped on the crest of a hill to make a survey of the land with a critical eye. Once, sitting down on a stone, he took out a bit of thin paper and traced some lines on it; lines that would have had

little meaning to one not familiar with the first sketches of those who draw maps.

Reaching the camp at last, the schoolmaster explained his situation to the sentry who halted him, and was sent under guard to the officer of the day, who received him cordially, congratulating him on his proper view of the trouble in the colonies, and promising him whatever help he could give in finding a place to teach school. "Though, bless your heart," he went on, "I fear you will fare ill enough. The country people are so distraught by the presence of war among them, and so scattered in their wits, that they have little thought of schooling their children, even if there were a chance for peace and quiet. And, what's more, I fear me your little rogues would be truant most of the time, for we find them much given to lingering about the camp listening to the marvelous tales with which our grenadiers fill their ears; an employment, I warrant you, far less profitable than sitting quietly at school at the feet of a master learning their A B C's; although, you will grant me, more fascinating to the young fancy."

Taking leave of the talkative officer with many thanks, the schoolmaster set out once more on his bootless errand, this time turning toward the western end of the island, where there was even less chance of his sort of employment than in the spot where he then was; for the western end was more overrun than this with British and Hessian soldiers, with

camp and forts. Nevertheless, thither he turned his steps, with a countenance lacking in guile, and denoting cheer and good hope.

But there was this to observe about his manner of walking through the camp, and out along the road. Although to one who did not look closely he seemed to be going along with eyes to the front, lost in rumination over some abstract doctrine in philosophy or a question in higher mathematics, on close inspection it might have been seen that his eyes were never still from roving from side to side of the way, peering deep into distances, noting trivial details of his surroundings. And there was something attentive about the expression on his face to denote that he was noting down on his memory what he saw; fixing it there, so that it might be laid hold of again. Strange behavior for a schoolmaster, seeking a peaceful occupation teaching school! And strange schoolmaster, to be seeking such occupation there, at such a time!

Four days later, as the sun was dragging long rays across the western hills of Long Island, the schoolmaster sat on a log in a little gully not far from the tavern kept by the Widow Chichester—Mother Chick, as Farmer Johnson called her. The gully was in an odd nook of the hills, far from the road. It was sheltered by a thick growth of oaks and maples along its brim. The log itself was heavily screened by underbrush.

Seated on the log, the schoolmaster drew from an inner breast pocket a number of bits of thin paper, similar to the one on which he had sketched a map the first day of his appearance on the island. Laying the papers on the ground, where he secured them with a small stone, he began to unbuckle his shoe. He looked about him cautiously before he pulled it off when the buckle was unfastened. Making certain that he was unobserved, he drew it from his foot, took it in one hand, and thrust the other within. Presently his hand emerged, holding in its fingers a leather sole, cut to fit the inside of the shoe. Snatching up the papers which he had laid on the ground, the schoolmaster thrust them into the shoe, slipped the sole back, smoothed it out, put the shoe on, stamped his foot well into it, fastened the buckle, arose, and made his way out of the gully, turning at the brink in the direction of Mother Chick's.

Strange behavior for a schoolmaster, in search of a chance to teach the children of Tories that King George was anointed by God to rule the English-speaking people, and that all notions of liberty and the rights of men to rule themselves were arrant nonsense that ought to be punished! What should he be doing with a shoe having a false bottom? What should he be doing with thin slips of paper which he concealed with such secret care in that novel hiding-place? What manner of schoolmaster was he, wandering up and down Long Island in the midst of British soldiers after this fashion?

Half an hour later a company of British officers and neighborhood Tories, gathered together in Mother Chick's tap-room for a carousal, were struck with much mirth at the appearance in their midst of a simple looking person, dressed in black knickers, and a black coat, with lace at cuffs and collar, and wearing a broad-brimmed felt hat of black.

"What, ho, parson!" sang out one lusty fellow, already in his cups, thwacking the table mightily with an empty tankard. "Hast come to preach, or to fortify thy spirit for this earth with some of the rare spirits which good Dame Chichester furnishes forth at her tap?"

"Hold your uncivil tongue, Duncan," shouted another. "'Tis no preacher, by my troth, but the schoolmaster I told you of, who came seeking a chance to teach in these parts." The one who spoke was the officer to whom the stranger had been conducted by the sentry on the first day, in the camp five miles south.

"Teach, is it!" roared the other, with a great laugh. "We'll teach him that we do all the teaching that is to be taught in these parts in times like these. Here, school-teacher, learn from a cup, and have done with your sour looks."

The schoolmaster met the bully's look boldly. "I am inclined to the opinion that whatever might be learned of you, sir, would be best soon forgot," he observed quietly. "And as for your cup, the only lesson in that is the lesson which you yourself pre-

sent to all who have the misfortune to look upon you in your present condition."

It was a bold speech, but well considered. The schoolmaster knew it would set him in favor with the company. The others, greatly edified to see their roistering companion so bearded by a peace-loving schoolmaster, made many gibes at Duncan's expense, restraining him from wrecking the wrath of which he made a great blustering show, and twitting him out of his humor.

"Nay, comrade," said the officer who had recognized the stranger, "be not so savage. For the fellow is on our side, as you can well see by his being here, and moreover, I am not so certain that his plan is not a good one, for, by my troth, I think we are more like to subdue these savages over here in America by bringing them to some reason through the teaching of sound-headed fellows like this than we are to be breaking their sconces with swords and musket butts."

They pressed the schoolmaster to drink with them in celebration of his defiance of the bully, and of the peace that had followed it, but he refused, modestly and civilly, protesting that liquor made him ill, and that he could not take it without great danger to himself. Pacified by his demeanor, they went on with their roistering, content to let him sit by in observation of it, and forgetting by degrees that he was there.

Thus left more to himself, the stranger loitered

about from one group at table to another, exchanging informal greetings, discussing with this one the state of the weather and the prospect of an early and severe winter, with its probable effect on the two armies, and holding argument with that over the position and situation of the British and American forces, together with the chances that General Howe would be able to crush the patriots before the snow flew. Such conversation was common in the room ; excepting some of the roisterers, to whom serious topics had no present interest, there were few groups who did not speak of the war and express themselves freely on the tactics that Howe was pursuing, or failing to pursue, to get the Yankee general in another such box as the one from which Washington had escaped several months before. No notice was taken of a schoolmaster who had sought lodgings in the tavern, and had joined the party in the tap-room to pass away the evening.

No notice, except by one. One there was whose eyes scarcely left the face of the schoolmaster ; who followed him from group to group, studying him, scanning his features from this angle and that, weighing him with his eye, testing the sound of his voice with head aside, like one who found in him a resemblance which puzzled. This fellow was a Tory ; a strong sympathizer with the English, and a friend of a number of the officers.

He had been watching the mysterious schoolmaster for upward of an hour in this fashion, when

he went to the table where the officers were sitting of whom Duncan and the schoolmaster's chance acquaintance were two. Drawing a chair behind the latter's chair, he leaned over his shoulder and whispered in his ear. "Do you know who that is, Captain Watts?" he asked.

"Who who is?" bellowed Captain Watts.

"Hush; not so loud. That schoolmaster, as you think him."

"Loud!" roared the officer. "I'll be as loud as I choose. What is the meaning of all this nose-poking mystery hereabout? Who is this schoolmaster, then, since you think it so important that I should know?"

The stranger, hearing himself referred to, glanced across the room, and saw the Tory in whispers with the captain.

"Not so loud, I tell you, or all will be lost," went on the Tory. "If I mistake not, it is a cousin of mine whom I have not seen for many years, by the name of Nathan Hale."

"You have many times shown so little sense that it is not strange to me that you do not know your own cousin when you see him, William Hale," laughed Captain Watts. "And what of this mighty cousin of yours, the schoolmaster? Is he an ogre, that we shall all be lost in case he learns that we are speaking of him?"

"If it is he, he is a spy," hissed William Hale. "For this Nathan Hale is an officer in the Conti-

mental army. He it was who captured the schooner with arms and stores in the East River not long ago, and he has done many things to endear him to the hearts of the desperate fellows with whom he has thrown in his lot. He is notorious as a reckless, harebrained dare-devil."

"Tush!" cried Captain Watts, interrupting him. "You have had too much liquor for your own good, friend Hale; and, mark me, you had better leave it alone for the rest of the evening, if you are a man, and get you off to bed, before you have other visions of spies and long-lost cousins. Tush, fellow; away with you."

The schoolmaster, catching a word or two of what had passed above the uproar, made his way across the room and took a vacant chair at the table of roisterers. "Gentlemen," he said, "by your leave, I will sit here, in the hope of listening to more edifying conversation in such company than has been my fortune elsewhere this evening." As he seated himself in the chair, he caught the eye of William Hale, whom he stared out of countenance, and the fellow slunk off, rebuffed by his friend the captain, and thrown in some doubt concerning the surmise that had been the topic of his talk.

"Hail, fellow; well met!" cried Captain Watts, extending an arm in half-drunken welcome. The others took up the shout, even Duncan joining, forgetting the affront that had been put upon him at an earlier hour in the evening.

"Methinks that one who does not care for good spirits would find more profit in bed," said Duncan, lifting a glass.

The schoolmaster smiled. "There would be little chance of sleep in this house to-night, I fear, with such merriment going forward, if one were inclined to it," he said. "As for me, I find more pleasure in sitting in such lively company, after a day of fatigue and disappointment, than I would in bed; and, although I cannot partake of the spirits you are drinking, I can enjoy the spirit in which it puts you."

The speech set him in good favor all around, and he was suffered to sit unmolested where he was, while the fun waxed more and more furious. If he seemed to listen with interest to the gay tales that went back and forth, the quips and jests, the songs and anecdotes, his eyes could have been seen to light up with a peculiar eagerness whenever the talk ran to shop, and the officers discussed the plans of campaign which they conjectured Howe was about to make.

But no one noticed that, not even the Tory, William Hale, who lounged about from one table to another, seeking some ear that would listen to his suspicion about the mild-mannered schoolmaster seated at the table with the officers. And if they had, would they have considered it strange that a schoolmaster, whose trade depended on peace being restored in those parts, should show a lively interest in

the prospects of bringing the war to a close in one campaign?

Half an hour before daylight the schoolmaster, excusing himself, bade farewell to the officers and left the tap-room. Reaching the hall, he did not ascend the stairs, but turned and went through the front door, out into the thick dusk of the night.

Out in the night he paused to look about him, and then moved rapidly toward the Sound. His step grew lighter as he proceeded; he seemed like a man who was finding relief from a burden of anxiety. Rather a strange circumstance in a schoolmaster who had failed in a four days' search to find employment.

Emerging through a strip of woods, he saw the broad sheet of water under the starlight, and gave a sigh. Turning to the left, he struck into the woods once more. Dawn of day was creeping in from the sea; it was already gray in the east, and a faint flush of light showed the way to him among the tree trunks, and between bushes.

Half a mile farther he bent his course until he came once more to the shore of the Sound. A mile or so beyond where he had broken cover a long, sheer headland jutted into the water. The growth of trees ceased at the shore line, leaving the promontory bare and conspicuous. Already, in the light of coming day, it stood forth distinctly against the waters beyond it. Toward this the schoolmaster turned eager steps.

It was not long before he had gained the outer tip of the headland, and was standing on the shore, which here broke down from the bluffs behind until it was only a few feet above the tide. He gazed eagerly across the Sound, searching the flood for something ; searching it, without doubt, for a vessel that he expected to meet him there. But what should a schoolmaster, dissatisfied with the patriot flavor of Connecticut, and in search of more agreeable employment among Tories, be doing there early on a September morning, stealthily watching for a craft to come from the Connecticut shore ?

For an hour he stood or sat about on the headland, scarcely taking his eyes from the sheet of water before him. The Sound was quite plain now in the strengthening light ; he could almost see the land on the other side.

At last, peering intently into the distance, he uttered an exclamation of gladness. Out on the water was a boat, dim and indistinct. It was approaching the shore.

He waited until it was within hailing distance. Rising to his feet, he held his curved hands beside his mouth and gave a halloo. His eyes quickened with a glad light ; a look of tension that had become so habitual on his face that it seemed to be a part of him, and so escaped attention, relaxed, giving place to an expression of complete and joyous relief.

In the next instant his expression changed again.

It became more anxious than it had been; it grew distressed with anxiety. For the men who stood up in the craft and sent back his halloo were dressed in the uniform of British marines!

Why should that have alarmed a Tory schoolmaster seeking a school among British friends? The question is puzzling; but the fact that he was alarmed was very apparent. He was so alarmed, so suddenly overcome by surprise, that, without thinking better of the act, he turned and took several steps landward in a brisk run.

"Halt!" came a hail from the barge; for such it was. "Halt, or we fire!"

He stopped abruptly, realizing his blunder; knowing that any attempt to escape would be vain if they raised an alarm by firing at him, and that it would merely make it necessary for him to give explanations of conduct inconsistent with his character as a Tory schoolmaster. He stopped, and returned slowly to the waterside.

The boat drew nearer. Men were in the bow of it, eyes fixed on him, consulting with each other.

"I thought for a moment you were Continentals," he shouted, as they drew closer.

There was an ominous lack of response to his explanation. The boat grounded, and two men waded ashore. "Come aboard," they said.

He went readily, assuming an air of freedom from care, of indifference to the evident suspicion of him that was behind their demand.

"What did you run for?" demanded the sergeant of marines, who was in charge of the boat's company.

"I told you that I mistook you for Yankees," he repeated.

The fellow scowled at him, and lifted a lip in a sneer. "What were you doing out here at this time of day?" he snarled. "Who were you looking for?"

The schoolmaster smiled as he replied. "Is it so strange that a man should be taking a stroll by the Sound in the early morning?" he submitted.

"Yes, it is. Back to the ship, lads," to the crew.

An hour later the schoolmaster stood in his stockings in the cabin of the British frigate *Acteon*, confronting the captain. On the table between them were his shoes. The false sole of one of them lay on the table; about it were strewn thin bits of paper, containing writing, and sketches of maps. "I will answer no questions," he was saying, calmly. "I beg to be referred to General Howe."

General Howe was quartered in the old Beekman mansion, in New York. There was great excitement about headquarters, and through the town, when the word went about that a spy had been captured and brought before the British commander. The commander himself was somewhat disturbed as he gazed into the handsome face of the young man in black velvet knickers and the black coat of a schoolmaster

who stood before him, meeting his eyes with a frank, honest, brave gaze.

"What is your name?" asked the Englishman.

"Nathan Hale, lieutenant in the Continental army," replied the schoolmaster.

"And what were you doing in our lines?" pursued the general.

"I was obtaining information for the benefit of the commander of the American forces," was the reply. There was no tremor of the eyelids, no quiver in his voice, as he answered.

Howe looked at him critically. "You are alive to the consequences of your conduct, sir, are you?" he asked. "You are aware of the punishment that is meted out to those who steal within an enemy's lines for the purpose which you confess was yours?"

"Sir," replied Nathan Hale, "there has not been a moment since I undertook the task that I have not been aware of the consequences that would be visited upon me in case I was detected. I was fully aware of the responsibility which I assumed, and I have nothing to regret except that the object of my sojourn among your troops was frustrated when it was so near accomplishment."

"You realize, then, that there is no hope for you?" went on the British commander. "You realize that by your own confession you are guilty of a crime for which there can be no punishment but death?"

Nathan Hale nodded his head, without taking his eyes from Howe's countenance. "The fortunes of

war have delivered me into your hands, sir," he said, in even voice. "You will doubtless not flinch from what you consider to be your duty. You shall hear no reproach from me in your exercise of it."

A flash of pity went across the Englishman's face as he waved a hand to those who had brought in the spy under guard; pity for the brave young man whom nothing could save, and admiration for his bravery.

There was silence for a space. It was broken by the low, measured accents of General Howe. "You shall be hung," he said . . . "in the morning."

It was Sunday, the 26th of September, in the year of our Lord 1776. The sun shone clear from a blue sky; fleecy clouds drove overhead before a gentle breeze that came wafting in from the sea; birds twittered from bough to bough of the apple trees in the orchard behind the Beekman mansion.

Platoons of soldiers were drawn up in a square about the orchard. In the midst of the soldiers was a group of officers, brilliant in scarlet uniform, heavy with gold lace. All about the orchard was a concourse of people, attracted thither by the news of what was going forward. Underneath one of the apple trees, standing on the rungs of a ladder which raised him above the ground, was a young man, dressed in the black velvet knickers of a country schoolmaster, with black coat, white lace at the cuffs and throat. About his neck was a noose; the other

end of the rope was fastened to a limb. His head was bare ; the sun shone through his light brown hair upon a face of beauty and serenity. In the eyes which met the stare of those about was a light of another world ; the glad fire of martyrdom. His lips were moving ; he was speaking. " My only regret is that I have but one life to give for my country," he was saying.

A signal from one of the group about the ladder—and the story of Nathan Hale had come to an end.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAN THEY CALLED A COWARD

NOBODY likes to be called a coward. If he really is a coward, he makes a great fuss about it. The braver he is, the longer he will stand it. Old General Herkimer stood it a long time before he lost his patience, and gave the order that cost him his life.

Old General Herkimer was a hard fighter. He had fought in Indian wars from the time he was a boy. He was over sixty now. Probably Herkimer himself could not have told how many fights he had been in. Probably he would not have told, if he could have done so, for he was not boastful; which is another trait of brave men.

Every one knew how brave he was. Even those who called him a coward, and a Tory—which was worse, to his thinking—knew that he was brave enough for two men. But they lost their tempers, and with their tempers their good sense, and said what came into their heads, without regard to whether it was true or not.

Herkimer lived in old New York State, in Tyron County. That was the name given to a vast stretch of country extending from the neighborhood of Albany off to the Great Lakes. It was a good deal of

a wilderness, and the Indians had not moved out when he lived there. The country was sparsely populated by whites. The feeling of loyalty to the king of England was strong among them; there were more Tories, perhaps, than whites. This resulted in a very savage state of affairs, for when neighbors fall out, as you know, they hate each other cordially.

When General Burgoyne started down from Montreal in 1777, to march through to New York and cut the colonies in two, General St. Leger undertook a movement in coöperation with him. Gathering together a force of Canadians and Tories, many of whom were from Tyron County, and inducing a number of Indians to join with him, he landed at Oswego, where he was joined by more Tories, under Johnson and the Butlers. Thence he marched toward Fort Stanwix, an American outpost held by six hundred men under Colonel Peter Gansevoort.

Herkimer heard of the advance of the British and Tories, with their Indian allies. It was bad enough to have his old neighbors attempting an invasion of New York, but the presence of Indians in their force stirred him to the depths of his fighting soul. Organizing a force fifteen hundred strong among the patriotic neighbors he started out to the relief of the fort, which was hard pressed by this time.

All went well until the little army reached Oriskany, eight miles from the fort. There Herkimer halted, and talked things over with his officers. They decided that the thing to do was to send mes-

sengers into the fort, telling of their approach, and arrange with Colonel Gansevoort that he make a sortie against his besiegers at the same time that Herkimer took them in rear.

The errand was a dangerous one, but men who were willing to undertake it were not hard to find in that company. The messengers were sent off early on the evening of August 5th ; so early that they were expected to reach the fort by three o'clock in the morning. It was arranged that Gansevoort should fire three signal guns to announce their arrival, and to notify Herkimer's force that the garrison was about to undertake their part of the program.

It was a wakeful night in the small force. The officers and men dozed around, waiting for the guns that were to be their signal to advance. Three o'clock came, and nothing was heard from the direction of the fort. Four and five arrived, and went down into eternal time without the signal. Hour after hour they waited. Then some of the officers, and most of the men, began to get impatient.

That was how it came about that they called Nicholas Herkimer a coward. They were certain that something had happened to the messengers, or that something was wrong in the fort. They thought they ought not to wait any longer. They wanted to advance without further delay. Herkimer was not willing to do that. He realized the importance of having the movement take place in conjunction with

the movement from the fort. He knew that when one has once formed a plan, and committed himself to it, and begun to execute it, any change in details is likely to make confusion and invite disaster.

"Wait a little," he said to his officers.

But when they had been whispering among themselves for a long time, and had begun openly to charge that the reason he would not advance was that he was a coward, and that he was in sympathy with the Tories, and that he was plotting to betray his command to help the king's cause, he would stand it no longer. "All right," he said. "You will find that I am the last man to give way before danger. Come on."

Whereupon the force moved off in long file along the wooded road toward Fort Stanwix.

It was then eight or nine in the morning. It was a picturesque sight, without doubt. There was not a uniform or a flag among them. They were farmers and pioneers, dressed in leather jerkins and trousers, with rough caps on their heads. They straggled along in a mass, without regard for military formation, talking and laughing among themselves. They were very little like an army.

But they all had their rifles or their muskets handy in their fingers, and a great courageous determination in their hearts; which, after all, is worth more in a fight oftentimes than flags and uniforms.

Two miles from their starting point the road crossed a little crescent-shaped ravine. At the bot-

tom of the ravine was a swampy place, over which the road ran on a causeway of logs. All about was a thick growth of trees and bushes. It was a capital place for an ambush.

The Americans moved down the slope of the hill into this ravine on a steady swing. They were not expecting to see an enemy yet. Nevertheless, they were enough used to Indian fighting to be on the lookout. They scanned the hills and peered through the bushes and behind trees for sign of a hidden foe as they marched. Herkimer, in the van of the column, was especially alert.

The head of the force had reached the bottom of the ravine, leaving the rear-guard some distance behind, when Herkimer, scrutinizing the bushes to left and right, caught sight of a movement in the leaves that could not be accounted for by the wind. He was watching the spot intently, waiting for another sign of life, when the woods all about them suddenly blossomed out into smoke. There was a great rattle of muskets, and balls went singing among them.

At the same time a troop of horse, rushing over the brink of the ravine in front, came charging down upon the startled body of men with savage yells, firing as they came. They were Sir John Johnson's Royal Greens, a famous Tory regiment.

There were two reasons why the ambush did not succeed at once in demoralizing and destroying the American force. One reason was that the Americans, backwoodsmen all, were not entirely surprised

being used to that manner of warfare. The other reason was Nicholas Herkimer, whom some of them had lately called a coward.

Wheeling his horse to face his troops, the doughty old veteran shouted to them: "Stand your ground! Beat 'em back! Keep cool, and stand firm! We'll give 'em some of their own medicine fast enough." Snatching his pistols from his holsters, he turned again toward the foe, and snapped them both in the very faces of the onrushing Greens.

The shock was terrific when the horsemen struck the thick American column. In a moment the road was a surging mass of humanity, cursing, firing, slicing at each other with swords, swinging at each other with musket butts. All around the edges of the fight were heard the popping of muskets in the hands of the Indians.

Johnson's Greens accomplished little. The Americans took to the bog, where the horses floundered helplessly when they undertook to follow. From this security they loaded and fired with comparative safety at the mounted men, who gradually withdrew.

"Mind the Indians behind you!" shouted Herkimer, in a voice heard above the uproar of battle. "They're coming through the trees and bushes."

There was no doubt where they were coming from. The brush was alive with them; the leaves were draped with wreaths and festoons of smoke, and blossomed with fire.

"Swing out. Form a circle!" shouted Herkimer, riding back along the causeway and sending the men hither and thither to posts of advantage. "Stand steady. Aim straight. There's no hurry."

His words and example gave them courage, and steadied them. They ran each to the nearest shelter, alert and watchful, shooting wherever an Indian showed his head. "Kill 'em!" bellowed Herkimer.

Just as the Americans were cooling down to their work, a shot struck the leader's horse. The animal sank to the ground with a scream and lay still. Men rushed to free their commander from the animal's body. "Are you hurt?" they asked.

"Nothing," answered the man whom they had called a coward. "Only a scratch in the leg. Lift me up."

Raising him, they saw blood pouring from a wound below the knee. His leg was shattered by the same ball that had killed his mount. His face was growing pale; it twitched with pain.

"Here," he said. "Help me to that tree." He pointed to a huge beech near at hand. "Bring the saddle. . . . You, there! Stoughton!" he called to one of his officers. "Get some men and take care of those Indians over there. Quick." Standing on one leg, supporting himself on the shoulder of one who was helping him to the tree, he pointed to where a band of Indians was pressing hard against a few of his soldiers, whom they outnumbered.

"You're bad hit, general," ventured the man he was leaning against.

"What if I am?" retorted Herkimer. "We've got to keep on fighting. . . . It's nothing but a scratch," he went on.

They helped him painfully to the tree. All the time his eyes were everywhere; he continued to shout his orders, sending men here and there where they were most needed. Not a detail of the fight escaped his observation; he was as self-possessed as he would have been in his potato field, directing men at their hoeing.

Some one brought the saddle and laid it down against the tree. They let him down gently. He propped himself against the huge trunk. "Look out for those red devils in that clump," he said to one of the group that stood irresolute about him. "They're sneaking up too close there. Clean 'em out. Never mind me. 'Tend to the redskins."

By this time the struggle had settled into a stubborn contest of a more definite character. The Americans were entirely surrounded by a host of hidden enemies who fired from behind trees and bushes. Now and then one or a dozen of them could be seen scurrying from one point of vantage to another, but for the most part they were revealed only by the flashes and smoke from their muskets.

But the Americans were equal to it. They had fought Indians before. Knowing the desperate nature of their situation, they steadied themselves to

meet it. Their only chance of life was in their courage, and their weapons. There was no chance to draw out. They plied both with a firm will. Creeping through the bog from rock to stump, from tree trunk to fallen log, they hid as well as their enemy, and fired as accurately at those who exposed themselves.

"Hey! Over there! To the right, behind that boulder," Herkimer yelled, showing some soldiers where the foes were thickening close to the lines of defense. "Give it to 'em, boys. We've got 'em where we want 'em now. They won't stand much more of it. Yah! That's the way." His voice arose above the crackling din of the conflict. His wounded, mangled leg lay extended along the ground before him. Some one was tightening a bandage about it. "Get back to your work, my man, and leave my leg to take care of itself," he ordered. "You can't make it whole, and you're needed."

The crash of arms and the yells of the combatants made a hideous noise in the narrow, tree-darkened ravine. Some of the men were up to their knees in the mire of the bog; some of them were lying in the water, firing deliberately, with great care for their aim. And some who lay in the water were not firing; their muskets had spoken for the last time in their hands.

Herkimer, fumbling in his pockets, pulled out a pipe. "Watch out," he cried, as he rummaged his pockets again for his tobacco pouch. "Watch out!

Don't let 'em get any closer by the causeway, there. They're crawling up behind it. Cross over and clean 'em out. That's the way. Bravo !"

The form of an Indian arose at a distance on the steep bank of the ravine. "Shoot him down !" cried Herkimer. "That's Brandt."

Brandt was the leader of the Indians ; a mighty brave and a great warrior. Before the one whom Herkimer had directed to kill him could draw bead, the Indian vanished.

"Don't let him get away again like that," the doughty general reproved. "Get him, and they'll all run like sheep."

He drew his pouch forth, and began to fumble at the latchet strings. "Burton !" he called, as he was filling the bowl of his pipe. "Burton ! Take what men you can get and work in behind us. They're swinging around ; they're trying to mass in our rear. Stop it."

The rattle of arms and the yells of the fighters redoubled as Burton went to meet the strategy of the enemy. Herkimer watched the outcome narrowly as he finished off the top of his pipeful with a fat thumb and stuck the stem in his mouth.

"How are you getting on, general?" asked an officer, running up to him.

"How are *you* ?" returned the old warrior. "Is your work all done?"

"I wanted to see whether anything could be done for you," stammered the other.

"There can. Get back into the line and you'll be doing it."

The man, abashed, leapt behind a tree and swung his gun to his shoulder, waiting for a view of a foeman.

Herkimer, without taking his roving eyes from the scene of battle, produced flint and tinder box, struck a light, applied it to the piled tobacco in his pipe-bowl, drew in a half dozen hearty puffs, and settled back against the tree with a sigh. A twitch of pain passed over his features; he was growing paler.

"Now, then, men, we're holding them," shouted Herkimer, seeing that the movement to the rear was being checked. "Keep it up; keep it up. They won't last long now!"

He drew his pipe out of his mouth and blew a cloud of smoke into the air.

A man came reeling toward him, whimpering, his head in his hands. Blood ran through his fingers and streaked along his wrists. "What now? What now?" demanded Herkimer, sternly.

The man sank down beside the wounded general with a gasp. "I can't see! I can't see!" he wailed. "I'm hit! Oh, I'm killed!"

"So'm I," returned Herkimer, gruffly, "but if I had two legs under me I wouldn't be here. Get back into the fight. Fight 'til you die, man, fight 'til you die. It'll help you to forget."

"I can't see! Oh, I can't see!" whimpered the stricken man. "Oh, mamma, mamma!"



"GET BACK INTO LINE AND YOU'LL BE DOING IT"



"Tut, friend," said Herkimer, more gently. "If your mother was here she'd send you back to die like a man."

With a sob the man struggled to his feet, whirled two steps, wavered, and fell to the ground, dead. Herkimer, glancing at him, put his pipe in his mouth again and turned his gaze to a spot where the fight was growing hotter and hotter. That is war.

Hark! What was that? That sound like distant cannon? Had the messengers reached the fort? Was it Gansevoort's guns? Was he beginning his sortie against St. Leger? The sound was too long drawn out for that.

Herkimer listened again. Once more the distant rumble rose, grew heavy, and died away in a long reverberation. It was thunder.

Turning an eye upward, Herkimer perceived that the sky was rapidly clouding over. Black banks of cloud were hurrying in upon them; the leaves on the trees overhead twitched nervously in a rising breeze. Shadows deepened through the gloomy ravine.

Herkimer shook his head. Rain would mean that the firing would stop; the rain would wet the powder in the firing pans. What would happen then?

The hot spot in the fighting was getting hotter, and drawing nearer. Nothing could be seen of the enemy; the increasing gloom, and the smoke from their guns, obscured their position. Only by the sound of the firing could their position be determined.

“Over there! Over there!” bellowed Herkimer, directing a squad of men to the danger point. “Drive ’em out of that.”

The men were off at a run, dodging behind trees and bushes.

A drop of rain came driving down through the foliage and lit on the old man’s hand. He brushed it off unconsciously against his sleeve. The wind sang through the trees; a bright flash of lightning raced across the sky, throwing a lurid instantaneous light upon the scene.

It showed men crouched behind logs and rocks, loading and firing, alert, watchful, grim, determined.

A rumble of thunder; another flash of lightning; a distant hissing, and a thick dash of rain swept among the leaves. A lull; another dash of rain; a steady pour. Darkness descended like a pall, shot through and through by incessant flashes of lightning.

Gradually the sound of firing died away. The muskets were wet; they could no longer be fired. What would happen next?

The man against the tree could see only by the lightning flashes what was happening. He saw the dusky forms of savages rising up out of their hiding-places in the covert; saw them dash against his own men, with hatchets raised, brandishing knives, swinging muskets by their barrels. He saw Johnson’s Greens swarming in, with knives and pistols and hatchets. He saw his own men brace themselves to meet the onslaught; saw them close and grapple

with their foemen ; saw them clinging close in embraces of death ; heard their harsh breath dragging through set teeth ; their cries, their curses, their screams of rage and despair and mortal agony. Saw and heard all this, and went on smoking quietly at the base of the beech, helpless, unable to make a move to turn the fight.

Now a horrid struggle began. Down there in that dark ravine, with the storm shrieking about their ears and the thunder crashing and mumbling above them, with the rain flooding down over their shoulders, into their upturned faces, lighted now and then by the flames of heaven, filled with hate and the fear of death, man to man they struggled, as their cave-dwelling progenitors had fought—to the death.

The crash of firing had hushed suddenly into the subdued sounds of intimate struggle that was like an awful silence in comparison. Wicked strokes were given and taken ; blows that crushed out life. Men, clutching at each other's throats, looked one another in the eye, looked unutterable angry hatred, mingled stifling breath with breath, until one, or both, felt the sharp prick of the knife beneath his shirt, felt the edge grate swiftly between his ribs, felt strength evaporate from him, and sank into the mire, never to rise. The hour was inhuman ; the blackness of the day, the close-crowding rim of the ravine, made the struggle seem like some mighty conflict between demons in a land that was not like the earth.

Herkimer, sitting in the rain, drenched to the skin, catching glimpses now and then of the struggle that failed to tell him how it went, presently saw a rift of light creep into the sky behind the hill. Against the rift he saw a human form, pausing for an instant before it disappeared. While he still looked, puzzled, wondering, he saw another and another.

The rift widened; a faint glow of light suffused the bloody ravine. Looking still toward the rim of hills, Herkimer beheld more figures; more and continually more. Suddenly he understood. They were Indians, and they were running away! The fight was won!

"They flee! They flee!" he shouted. "Into 'em, men! They're breaking!"

A slight increase in the muffled noises in the gloomy gulch answered his urging; a growth of sound like the lifting voice of wind in a distant pine forest. With it grew more frequent the screams of dying men. The Americans, reheartened, fell to with renewed vigor, slaying more mercilessly than they had yet slain their foes.

"Look! There they go!" thundered Herkimer, exulting. "Over the edge of the hill!" You might have thought him on the side-lines at a football game, with his team pushing the ball across for the touch-down that won the game. "Into 'em, men! Pitch in! They're running away!"

Now against the rapidly clearing sky those who

remained to fight could see the savages vanishing over the hill in knots and pairs ; in throngs ; in swarms. A mighty yell of triumph arose ; they fell to with a sudden new strength, forgetting their fatigue, forgetting their hurts.

It was over. Seeing themselves deserted by their savage allies, the Tories, harder pressed, gave way and fled. Like sun-scattered mist they vanished, leaving the hideous death hole barren of enemies. The fight was won. Herkimer, with a sigh, closed his eyes, and rested his weary head against the trunk of the huge beech tree.

It was over, but at what a cost ! For four hours, under the hot August air, they had been fighting. More than one-fourth of their number lay dead. The fighters, utterly exhausted, threw themselves down where they were, or crept off to some dry spot, out of the gory mire. When the sky cleared, as it did quickly, the sun looked down through the trees upon seven hundred dead and wounded men, lying among those who breathed deeply of a hard-earned rest. So spent they were, so listless, that even the sound of distant firing from the direction of Fort Stanwix, which presently came to their ears, could not arouse them to further effort. The messengers, arriving at the fort at last, had given the word, and Gansevoort had attacked. But it was too late for the success of the plans which Herkimer had laid, and which he had abandoned because there were those among his men who called

him coward. Although the garrison punished St. Leger badly, driving him from his camp and seizing quantities of his stores, they could not crush him, and he was able to maintain his position until Benedict Arnold, coming up through the woods from Saratoga, so frightened his Indian allies that they deserted him to a man.

It was late in the day when the exhausted survivors of the fight in the ravine gathered themselves together and marched wearily back to Oriskany, bearing their wounded with them on litters made of green boughs. Bearing with them, too, their general with a shattered leg, calmly smoking his pipe in silence.

What man was there now to call him coward? What man was there now whose heart did not beat with pride and love for him?

But he had paid the price. Two days later, in spite of all that the crude surgery of the backwoods could do for him, he died.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN ARNOLD SHOULD HAVE DIED

THERE is not one among you who read this book, I hope, who does not bristle up at the mention of the name of Benedict Arnold. You remember how he tried to betray West Point into the hands of the British, and how he would have succeeded, probably, if John Paulding and two other loyal Americans had not picked up Major André traveling through the woods along the Hudson and found in his stocking papers that showed what Arnold was trying to do. We all detest a traitor, whether he gives away a hiding-place in "I Spy," or throws us down in a game of ball, or betrays his country. We detest him more, of course, if he betrays his country, and that is what Arnold did.

Before he did that, however, he did many other things for which we would like to love him if we could. And there was one time in his life, when, if he had died, he would have been one of our great national heroes. It is that time that this story is about.

The first thing Arnold did that made him a hero was soon after the battle of Bunker Hill. He went to Boston in response to the call to arms. Finding nothing to be done there when he arrived, he

proposed a plan to go and capture Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Ticonderoga was a fort at the junction of Lakes George and Champlain, in northern New York. It was an important point. The principal route from Canada to the colonies passed along the two lakes and into the Hudson River basin. In those days people traveled all they could by water, for lack of good roads. Crown Point was another important post, further down Lake George. They were not only of consequence for their military value, but the British had large stores planted there, which would come in very handy for the Continental boys, who were lacking in weapons and munitions. So Arnold, finding nothing to do about Boston, and wanting very much to do something, proposed to go and capture the two British forts.

After a certain amount of red tape was unwound,—and there was more of it in those days than there is now, because no one knew then who was in authority, and where the authority came from,—after the tape was unwound, Arnold was given a commission, and permission to raise a force of volunteers for the purpose.

When he arrived on the ground where he intended to recruit his force, he learned that Ethan Allen, of Connecticut, had already set out on the same errand with a body of Green Mountain boys. Arnold, overtaking him, tried to obtain command of the Green Mountain boys, on the strength of the commission which had been given him. Allen and the others

only laughed at him. Instead of being offended Arnold swallowed his pride and enlisted in the force as a volunteer. It is quite clear that at that time Arnold was free from the personal ambition with which he has been charged, and which is said to have been his ruin finally. He was willing to fight in the ranks, if only he could fight.

You remember the story of the capture of Ticonderoga; we are not concerned with it here. The next thing he did for which we would love him if we could was more than brave. It required big-hearted and dogged courage. He led a force of men through the woods of Maine, against disheartening obstacles, and brought them to Quebec, intending to capture that town from the British. It is a long, pathetic story. It ended in a reckless midnight assault on New Year's Eve against the citadel, in which Arnold was wounded in the left leg. That was the night when Montgomery was killed. The expedition was a failure. Arnold had done all he could, and much more than most men would have done, to make it a success, but luck and too many British were against him.

He put up one fight on Lake Champlain against the British that would have been enough in itself to make him a hero for us, even if he had never done anything else. He slapped together a fleet of boats, when the British were coming down from Canada on their first invasion, and fought their vessels to a standstill all through one long and heavy day. At night

his own craft were little better than wrecks. The English surrounded them, nearly, and expected to finish them off the next day. In the night Arnold slipped out around the end of their line and went scurrying off up Lake George toward Crown Point with his tiny fleet. When the British overhauled him at last, Arnold stood at bay and fought them off for four hours with one schooner, while the rest made their way to safety. When they were safe, and when most of his crew were dead or wounded, and his vessel was tottering on the top of the water, he ran her ashore. The remnant of his crew took to the woods, making their way to their comrades. That was fighting that you would like to read about, if you haven't.

In spite of all he had done, Congress overlooked him in appointing five major-generals for the Continental army. Arnold was deeply hurt. He would have resigned had not Washington persuaded him to remain with the army and fight. Perhaps he was becoming ambitious; but there had been bickerings and politics enough behind his back to make any man angry. There is no doubt that he was treated shabbily. There was one man in particular, of whom you will presently hear more, that plotted against Arnold, and every one else, even Washington, in most selfish fashion. That man was General Horatio Gates.

It was at about this time that Arnold distinguished himself in another fight with the British. He was

visiting his two boys in Connecticut—their mother was dead—when he learned that a body of redcoats had landed and was making a march into the interior for the purpose of plundering the country and seizing some arms ; much such a march as the one out of Boston, in '75, which resulted in the battle of Lexington and Concord. Arnold jumped on his horse and started for the scene of trouble, picking up troops as he went. When he came upon the British he had quite a respectable army, which he used to such advantage that the British were glad to get back to their ships alive. Many of them didn't.

His relief of Fort Stanwix, in New York, in 1777, is another instance of the man's courage and love for fighting. In 1777 the English began the execution of a large plan to cut the colonies in two. Burgoyne started down from Canada, took Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and struck out for the Hudson. Howe was to come up from New York with a large force and meet him at Albany, and St. Leger, with Canadians, Tories, and Indians sailed across the bottom of Lake Erie and moved up the Mohawk to join the two. If they had succeeded New England would have been entirely severed from the other colonies, and it would have gone very hard with the patriots. They could not communicate by water, for the English controlled the sea absolutely.

In St. Leger's way was Fort Stanwix. I have told you about the fighting around there ; about Herkimer, and the battle of Oriskany, for instance. St.

Leger finally came up to Fort Stanwix, and was pressing it severely. The only chance the Americans had was in help from outside. One of the officers in the fort stole out at night, slipped through the British lines, and made his way to the American army that had gathered to oppose Burgoyne.

General Schuyler was in command of the army. General Schuyler was an able general and a noble man. But he was disliked by his officers and most of his men because he was from New York. You have no idea now of the bitterness there used to be between the colonies ; and New York was rather generally hated by all New England. General Gates was making the most of the feeling against Schuyler to have him deposed, and himself appointed in command of the army instead ; a scheme in which he finally succeeded.

Arnold had just reached the American camp when the courier came in with word from Fort Stanwix, begging for help. Arnold was a friend of Schuyler, and had little use for Gates. Schuyler called a council of war.

"He only wants to weaken the army," sneered one of the officers, in a whisper that all could hear, when Schuyler proposed sending a relief expedition. He meant that Schuyler wanted to weaken the force opposed to Burgoyne so that the English would meet with no trouble.

"Enough !" cried Schuyler, leaping to his feet. "I will take upon myself the responsibility !" He

bit his pipe so hard that he bit the stem in two, and the bowl fell crashing to the floor. "Where is the brigadier that will go?"

The brigadiers were silent. "I will go!" cried Arnold, springing up.

He was given a force, and went. On the way his men brought in half a dozen Tory spies that they had found. Among them was Yan Yost Cuyler, a half-witted fellow. When Yan Yost's mother heard that he was about to be hanged as a spy, she came to Arnold to beg for his life. Arnold agreed to spare him, if he would do as he was told to do. Yan Yost and his mother promised. Yan Yost was accordingly sent off with his hat and coat full of bullet holes, to tell the Tories and Indians around Fort Stanwix that a great host was coming to annihilate them. He did his work so well that the Indians, more than half afraid of simpletons to begin with, believing them possessed of devils, deserted St. Leger, and were soon followed by many Tories and Canadians. St. Leger, beside himself with anger and chagrin, was obliged to withdraw. When Arnold came to the place he could find no one to fight, and Fort Stanwix was relieved.

When Arnold returned to Saratoga Burgoyne's army was in a bad predicament. The English had just had a bit of bad luck in the disastrous defeat at Bennington of a force of Hessians Burgoyne had sent out foraging. The countrymen were swarming to the defense of their country from far and near.

Detachments of veterans were being sent from the Hudson River posts; Washington sent Morgan, with five hundred riflemen, and General Dearborn, with a brigade. With these troops General Schuyler had drawn the lines tight about the British, and they were struggling in his net, when Gates succeeded in being appointed in his stead.

Horatio Gates has been called the "Hero of Saratoga." I want you to know that he wasn't. If it had been possible to ruin the situation that Schuyler had so skilfully developed he would probably have done it. He was a vain, silly, incompetent officer, and undoubtedly cowardly. He was never under fire in his northern campaigns, leaving that to his soldiers, and after one fight which he lost in the South he ran two hundred miles in four days, never stopping to look behind him. That was the battle of Camden.

The American army was posted on Bemis Heights, on the west side of the Hudson. Detachments were strung along to the north, east of the river, on Burgoyne's line of communication. Burgoyne had crossed to the west side of the river, under orders to press on to Albany, where he expected to be met by Sir William Howe. Finding the American army strongly posted in his front, and learning that it was daily growing stronger, he decided that he must attack it at once, although it was already stronger than his. Retreat was out of the question. There were as many enemies in the rear as there were in

the front. His only hope was to sweep Gates out of his way and march on to Albany. And I am inclined to think he would have done it if it hadn't been for Benedict Arnold.

The American sharpshooters had a pleasant habit of climbing into the trees in front of their position and picking off any redcoats that might stray within range. A number of them were occupied in this pursuit on the morning of August 18, 1777, a short distance in front of Bemis Heights, when they caught glimpses of a number of redcoats flicking through the brush and undergrowth that lined one of the roads in the neighborhood. Now and then a flash of sunlight would dart up through the leaves, reflected from guns or bayonets. Occasionally the men in the trees would catch the sound of the clank of steel, or the mumble of footsteps. They reported at once to Arnold, who was in command of the left wing of the American force.

Arnold was not long in making out what Burgoyne was up to. He saw that Burgoyne was sending a force through the woods to attack the American extreme left. It was evident that the Englishman expected to roll up the American left and slip past with his army.

Arnold went to Gates and laid the situation before him. Gates sneered at him at first. He could not make up his mind what to do. Finally, when Arnold had pled with him for many minutes, he consented to let Arnold take Morgan's sharp-

shooters and Dearborn's brigade and attack the British.

It was not long before the British column, moving through the woods, found itself assailed with a surprising vigor. The fight became general. Arnold sent back repeatedly to Gates, begging for reinforcements. But Gates, with 11,000 idle troops burning for a fight, refused to send a man. If he had supplied the force, there is no doubt that Burgoyne would have fought his last fight that day. Arnold, with only 3,000 men, was very near whipping him as it was. Burgoyne withdrew to his fortified encampment, baffled.

Gates, aware of the success that Arnold's stroke had met, promptly sent word to Congress that he had won a victory, without so much as mentioning Arnold's name. But the soldiers mentioned it; mentioned it so much that Gates, who could not bear to hear any one else praised, grew angrily jealous. In a mean, petty spite he withdrew from Arnold's division Morgan's riflemen and Dearborn's brigade, the very troops with which he had won the fight a few days before. He furthermore told Arnold that as soon as Lincoln arrived with an army that he was bringing up, he would have no more use for Arnold.

The fighting general was so angry that he would have left the front at once had not the other officers prevailed on him to remain, and had he not been prompted to do so by the belief that he could be of

some assistance. So he stayed, keeping close to his headquarters, deprived of a command, but still determined to do what he could to crush Burgoyne and rescue the country from the threat of being cut in two. And the time when he should have died approached.

It was the seventh of October. Looking down from the door of his tent on Bemis Heights, Benedict Arnold, the general without a command, could view the field where he knew, sooner or later, great deeds would be done for the liberty of the colonies. The soft air of a warm autumnal day lay hazily over the scene, mellowing the woods, already bright with turning leaves, smoothing the fields into gentle billows, like a brown running sea. Not far from the foot of the hill a farmer had cleared the trees away and planted his hay and corn, now harvested. The barn and outhouses of his farm peeped up from behind green fir trees, set beside the buildings in a long row. Here and there on the farm the fields had been rudely torn into breastworks for a defense to the British troops, who were posted on the northern half of it. Soldiers could be seen through a good glass moving about their camp.

As he watched, Arnold saw some one running up the slope of the hill in great excitement. "They're coming," cried the boy, who was a soldier in Dearborn's legions.

"Who?" cried Arnold.

"Burgoyne. The British."

Arnold, biting his lip, turned into his tent. "It can't be borne," he muttered, under his breath. "Must I sit idly here all day, listening to the noise of the glorious game, with the smell of burnt powder in my very nostrils, without striking a blow? And all for that popinjay over there?" He flung a look angrily in the direction of General Gates's tent.

He sprang to his feet and went to the door of his tent. The young man that had come running up the hill was returning whence he had come, more leisurely. "Ho, there!" cried Arnold.

The soldier stopped.

"What news is this, my man?"

The soldier approached, a bit bashfully, for in the eyes of those who fought Benedict Arnold was a man to be revered and respected. "Burgoyne is marching out along the road through Freeman's Farm," replied the soldier, pulling off his hat in a salute; he was a raw recruit. "There are thousands of 'em," he went on. "Gory! I wish——"

"What do you wish?"

"Nothin'," returned the lad, fidgeting.

"Come, come, out with it!"

The boy was frightened. "I wish I was goin' to fight with you again," he stammered.

"So do I," muttered Arnold, with a quick frown, turning into the tent again. The soldier fled, thinking he had offended his hero.

A shot came puttering through the soft air.

Another, and another. Arnold clenched his fists. "There they go!" he cried. "They are at it!" The light of battle was flaming in his eyes; his lips grew thin and quivered. You could almost fancy that he was whimpering, like an eager bird-dog, waiting for the sound of a gun.

The firing grew to sound like pop-corn in a popper. It rose swiftly through a long, swelling rattle into a mighty and incessant crash of musketry. Suddenly there tore through the sharper sound the heavy booming of cannon. The battle came to an issue with unusual swiftness.

Arnold, in his tent, could endure it no longer. He rushed out, glasses in hand, to view the scene. His magnificent black charger whinnied and pawed the ground at a little distance, scenting the fray.

Down in the fields and woods by Freeman's Farm he could see the two armies closing in a death grapple. Beyond, to the left, was the sound of Morgan's rifles; he knew them by their sharp crack, not like the blat of the muskets.

His heart beat mightily within his breast as he beheld the long red line of British heroes meet and fling back the surging swarms of eager Americans. One to five, they stood stalwart and brave, fighting a good fight. The brave officer, standing idle, viewing the fight from a distance, tingled through every tissue to be in the thick of it. His eyes flashed; his breath scraped in his throat; he could hear the pulses of his heart gush through his arteries.

They were breaking ! The British were breaking ! Their line was wavering ; crumbling up. Fighting doggedly, the British were beginning to withdraw. The patriots were too many for them. Arnold, in his excitement, beat his palm with his fist, and cried out " Courage ! "

The slow moving mass of redcoats was coming to a stand again. They were forming once more, farther back, rallied by some one. It was Frazer ; Arnold knew him by his gray horse. If they should hold there, perhaps —

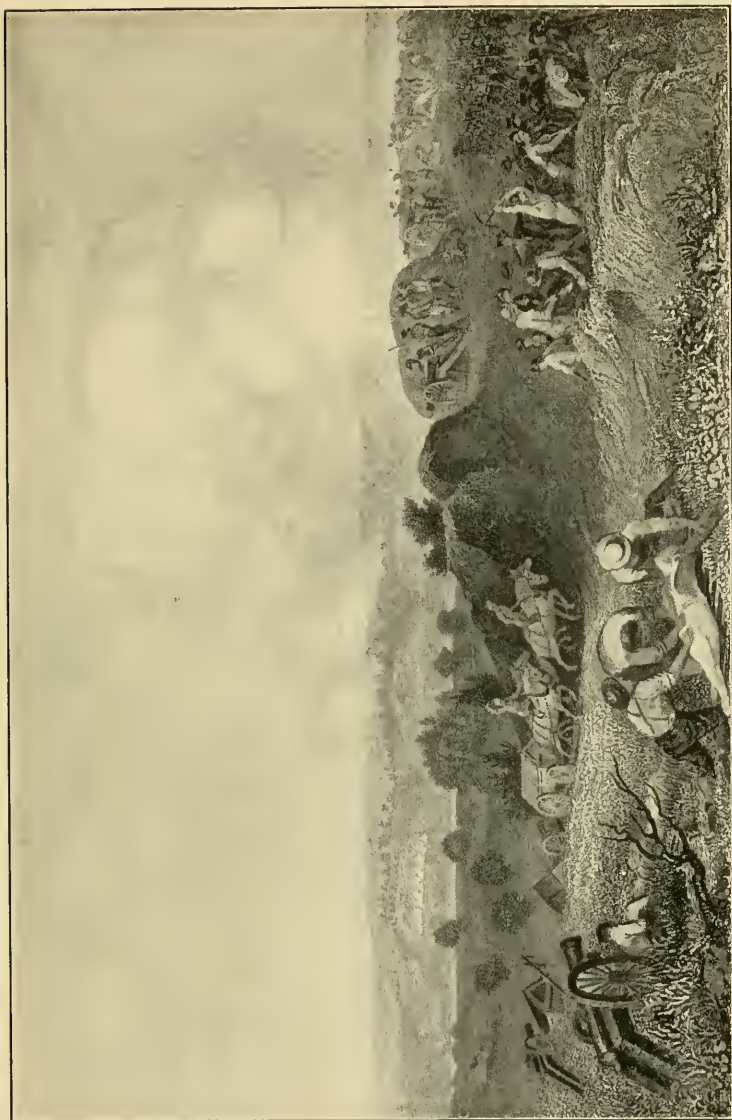
Arnold could stand it no longer. " I will fight as a private, if I cannot fight as an officer ! " he cried, and dashed to where his charger stood, whickering for the fray.

He untied the beast, leaped into the saddle, put spurs, and was off down the hill like a demon, lying low in the saddle, impatient of the speed the noble animal was making down the slope.

Gates, sitting at the door of his own tent, beheld Arnold dashing toward the battle line. " Stop that fellow ! " he cried, snapping his fingers at an orderly. " Stop him. He will be doing something rash ! "

The orderly gave chase, but coming soon to a place that was too hot for his liking, he gave up. Arnold might do something rash if he chose ; the orderly did not propose to. He was an orderly, doubtless, after Gates's own heart.

Glancing past the straining black neck of the charger that bore him, Arnold could see the British



THE BATTLE SWIFTLY CAME TO AN ISSUE



forming again in the rear of the position from which they had been driven. If that formation could be crushed, his soldier's wisdom told him, the British army would be defeated,—destroyed, perhaps. But if it held. . . . He set his spurs against the flanks of his animal again, urging him forward.

What sound was that, rising above the crash of battle? What glad cry? Nothing but the soldiers giving welcome to their commander. Nothing but the cheering of the brave lads when they saw him come among them, magnificent, furious, flaming battle from his eyes, exultant in conflict. Such a man to turn a traitor!

“Forward! On to victory!” His voice rang out above the din. He waved his sword toward the newly formed British line. With a mighty glad shout they rushed after him; after the general without a command.

General Frazer, brave, cool, calm, was riding up and down the line, steadying it. “Who is that devil raging there at the head of those Americans?” he demanded, puzzled and half angry to be obliged to fight against such fury.

“Arnold!” answered half a dozen. “We know him! It's that father of all fighting devils, Benedict Arnold.”

“How so!” cried Frazer. “We were told he no longer fought in the American lines?”

“You may see him fighting now. Here he comes!”

Frazer did not see him coming, for in that instant a bullet, sent to slay him under orders from Arnold himself, did its errand. With a quick sigh and a shudder, he doubled limply in the saddle and slid to the ground.

At that instant Arnold struck the British line with the force of a tornado. The shock was irresistible. The men behind him were inspired with reckless valor. Nothing could stop them. The redcoats, hesitating a moment through very shame of running, turned at last and fled.

Seeing them broken and flying, Arnold swung his troops to the left, shouting to them to follow him to victory. With a wild yell, they dashed upon the next line of British.

Finding these too strongly posted behind entrenchments which they had thrown up some days before, Arnold, with rare presence of mind, swerved farther to the left and led his joyous charge against a brigade of Canadians. Towering above the swarm of men that raced along beside his black charger, he was a sight for heroes to behold. His ringing voice raised a tremor of zeal as it penetrated the din-beaten ears of the soldiers.

His force, drawn about him for sheer love of fighting with such a one as he, was growing stronger every moment. The Canadians did not stand. They melted like sand in front of a wave.

Stopping for nothing, Arnold dashed himself against the Hessians, standing like a rock at the ex-

treme right of the British line. They were stubborn ; they fought back sullenly, refusing to be defeated. But there was a fury about the assault, led by the furious fighter on the black charger, that would not be denied. They gave at last, reluctantly, slowly, stubbornly.

Arnold, shouting victory, pressed after them. His black horse was tossing foam from its lips, snorting, rejoicing.

There was a sharp report from beneath the very feet of the animal. It reared, screamed, lurched on its haunches, and rolled over on the ground, dead.

A soldier rushed to Arnold's aid. The general, his face whitening, was holding his hand against his left thigh. Blood was trickling between the fingers. He was looking at a wounded Hessian, lying on the ground a pace away, propping himself on an elbow. The Hessian's gun was in his hands.

"Are you hit?" asked the soldier.

"In the leg." The leg was broken ; the same leg that had received a wound at Quebec.

A snarl of rage broke from the soldier. He understood now. It was the Hessian that had shot Arnold.

He grasped his own musket, and was rushing upon the wounded German to kill him, when Arnold cried out : "For God's sake, don't ! He is a fine fellow !"

That is when Arnold should have died. What a memory of him would then have lived down our his-

tory ! What a bitter, hateful story would have been spared if some merciful bullet had found its way to his heart then, in the midst of his great victory ! In the moment of supreme triumph ; in the moment when he spared the life of the poor soldier who had tried to kill him, he should have died !

What follows needs no telling. The surrender of Burgoyne ; the crying up of Gates as a hero ; the great joy which swept through the thirteen states, heartening them for the long struggle that was ahead. That is known to you all. But perhaps you had not known that Benedict Arnold was all the hero that any one could wish until his heart cankered and he became a traitor to the cause for which he had fought so tremendously.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER SORT OF HERO

THERE are several kinds of courage. There is the courage that is aroused in a man by excitement, by a sense of heroics and the spectacular, by love of applause, by desire for fame, or by the shame of being cowardly. This is frequently the kind of courage that sends a soldier against the enemy's guns with a shout in his throat. It is often the form of courage that keeps the crippled half-back in the football game, and sends him hurling himself against the opponent's line while his partisans are yelling from the grand stand. It is a very good sort of courage, in its way.

But there is another sort of courage that is better. This is the courage that keeps a man true to his faith and principles against discouragement and difficulties. It is the kind of courage that holds up against temptations; that doesn't need applause or hope of reward, or excitement to keep it alive. The kind that carries a man through a slow, monotonous duty to the verge of death, and beyond. It is called moral courage.

Sometimes the man that has moral courage has not the other kind, which is physical. He may be afraid of getting hurt; he may shrink from a fight

with another man. He may be positively timid and frightened in the presence of a material danger, but be willing to surrender his life in slow sacrifice if necessary rather than abandon his ideals.

This was the sort of courage that marked Christopher Martin. When he enlisted in the Continental army, joining a Connecticut company soon after the battle of Lexington, he dreaded war and the prospect of battle. He enlisted because he believed in fighting for his rights, and not because he wanted to fight.

While his compatriots were repulsing the British at Bunker Hill he lay at Cambridge with his company trembling with physical fear at the sound of the guns. At the battle of Long Island only sheer shame kept him from running before his comrades finally broke and fled to the Heights, after they had been outflanked by the British. At White Plains he was in a torture of apprehension ; at the Brandywine he could scarcely refrain from flinging down his gun and sneaking away to hide.

But it was not until the fight in the fog at Germantown that he openly disgraced himself by physical cowardice. Until that time his pride prompted his ingenuity to conceal his state of mind from his comrades. If they thought that he was perhaps a little lacking in ardor when it came to fighting, his generous good-nature in camp and on the march, his kindness toward all whom he met, his readiness to give of what he had to those who lacked, and his

patience when he himself was without, won him the affection and regard of his company.

They called him "Little Chris," and made much of him during the long, tedious days of army life. You must remember that the Revolution was not what can be called an active war. There was a long time between fights. Washington had so few troops with which to oppose the enemy that he avoided battle when he could; which showed a very high grade of moral courage in him, because every one was complaining of his inactivity.

There was one man in Christopher's company who was especially fond of Little Chris, and made a great pet of him. This was a big, strong, hearty fellow several years older than the boy, and a fighter by nature. He loved danger, and was always aching for a chance at the British. He was never happier than when he stood in the front rank of the battle line, with the bullets whistling about his ears, plying his musket and waiting for an order to charge. He was quite the hero of the regiment. His name was Philip Worth.

Philip and Little Christopher had managed to get places in the company's ranks next each other. Christopher would have preferred a less exposed position than the one Philip selected, but was too proud to show his preference, so he swallowed the lump in his throat and marched off with a show of bravery when the order was given to fall in and move on the English at Germantown.

The English army under General Howe had sailed down from New York City and advanced on Philadelphia, defeating Washington at the Brandywine by a flank movement, and occupying the City of Brotherly Love, which was then the largest town in the colonies and the place where the Continental Congress had been in the habit of meeting.

A large part of the English army was stationed in the little town of Germantown, five or six miles from the capital. Washington felt the need of striking a blow against the enemy, although there was not much chance of winning. His countrymen were becoming discouraged by his inactivity ; he realized that it would be better to lose a battle than to go on longer without fighting. So he planned a skilful attack, and ordered the advance.

The Continental army set out in the evening, intending to surprise the enemy. It was arranged that some were to attack the right wing of the British in front, while Greene moved against their flank, the left wing meanwhile being kept busy by a demonstration in their front.

The attacking army arrived at Germantown early in the morning. Things went wrong from the first. One column of the patriots got hung up in an attack on a British outpost, and when General Wayne kept on to do what had been assigned him a fog came up, so that he lost his bearings, and was not quite certain where the enemy was.

Meanwhile General Stepen, of Greene's division,

was advancing. Hearing the firing about the outpost, his troops bore off to the right, in the direction of the uproar. The fog was so dense that they could scarcely see fifty yards. When they beheld a rank of shadowy figures ahead of them in the mist they opened fire on them with a will, believing them to be British.

Instead they were Wayne's troops, with Christopher and Philip among them.

That was when Little Chris lost his head. They had been advancing slowly and steadily, and had just begun to feel the enemy, and were opening on them, when they were taken in the rear by their own friends. Christopher, hearing the fire behind and in front, dropped his musket, turned pale, and began to make a strange noise in his throat, something like the whining of a dog.

Philip looked at him in surprise. "'Pon my soul, lad, what are you whimpering for?" he cried.

Christopher, forgetting everything in his fright, grasped his companion by the arm. "We're going to be killed; we're going to be killed!" he murmured, over and over.

Philip shook him off. "I'd as lief kill you myself for showing the white feather," he growled, savagely. "What kind of a soldier are you?"

There was a great shouting going up among the troops about them. No one knew quite what was the matter, and others besides Christopher were losing their heads. Christopher, able to stand it no

longer, turned and skulked to one side, leaving the ranks without even stopping to pick up his gun.

Philip, in a rage, picked the musket up and hurled it after him. It struck the boy on the leg, making a bruise that showed for many a day after that, but he did not feel it at the time.

Some one slapped him with the flat of a sword, ordering him to get back into line. But the bullets were whizzing in every direction ; instead of doing as he was told Christopher broke into a run, making off in the direction where there was least sound of firing.

He found, as he ran, that he was not alone. Others were straggling past him. They were outstripping him, because his leg had been really injured, although he was not aware of it at the time.

Presently the entire line gave way in more or less confusion, bearing Philip with it.

Christopher did not see Philip again until late in the day. The American forces had rallied after their confused retreat, and given a good account of themselves, but Christopher was not with them. He was in the rear, limping, for the sake of appearances and his conscience ; but the blow on his leg had not prevented him from gaining a safe place.

It was supper time when the crestfallen young patriot found his company again and crept up to it. It showed that he had courage to return at all. He might have deserted, as many of the soldiers did desert. The organization of the Continental army

was loose. There was no strong government behind to compel their loyalty, and Washington was too wise to be severe with his troops. Many of his men made it a practice to enlist in times of danger and return to their farms when danger was past. Desertion was winked at more or less ; the men must be indulged, or they would grow sulky, and recruiting in time of necessity would be difficult. So Christopher might have deserted, but he did not. Instead, he returned to face his comrades ; to face Philip Worth, especially.

Philip greeted him with a roar of reproach, sprang to his feet, and descended upon him in a towering rage.

"Strike me," begged Christopher, with a look of pathetic remorse in his eye. "Strike me. Kill me, if you wish. I deserve it."

Philip, disarmed by his humility, only took him by the collar and shook him roundly, abusing him the while with strong names. When he was released from the other's grasp Christopher crept up to the edge of the group about the camp-fire and waited for night to hide him.

It was many days before his patient good temper and efforts at amends won him some slight favor again among his comrades. It was weeks before he had largely outlived the blot he had brought upon his record. It was months before he showed the heroic strain that ran through his fiber, and became a hero to them all.

Having done what he could against the enemy, Washington was compelled to settle down while Howe captured Forts Mercer and Mifflin, which guarded the Delaware River below Philadelphia and threatened the British communications by sea. The forts fell after a heroic defense, to which Washington was unable to contribute.

Late in the fall General Howe moved out against the Americans, entrenched at Whitemarsh, with the intention of driving Washington over the mountains, where he would not molest the British in their occupation of Philadelphia. But Washington was too strong to be attacked, and would not be enticed into making an attack, although there was great clamor against him behind his back because he would not fight. Congress was in a stew over his inactivity, and there were many who compared his military conduct with the recent victory over Burgoyne in the north, pointing out what Gates had done, and what Washington did not do. It is difficult to believe that there were any unreasonable enough to make serious comparisons between the two. Washington had held the field through tremendous difficulties against a superior force; the other was a sluggard and a bungler who had nearly wrecked the work that others had begun in the north. But there were plenty, in and out of the army, who were lively enough with their tongues in belittling Washington.

Winter was approaching. Indeed, it was already

upon the two armies. The British were comfortably quartered in Philadelphia. All Washington could do was to settle down near at hand, where he could prevent the enemy from communicating with New York, and wait for the spring. His men were in a pitiable condition, without food and clothing sufficient for a severe season; many of them without blankets or shoes. But they must be kept together, and the spirit of the army must be kept alive through the winter months.

Washington chose his position at Valley Forge, twenty miles from Philadelphia, on the Schuylkill River. It was naturally a strong position among wooded hills, easy of defense. The army arrived there in December, when snow was already on the ground, and proceeded to make it into a winter camp. Streets were laid out, and the soldiers were set to work building log huts, cutting their material from the hillsides.

It was then that Christopher Martin began to show the stuff he was made of. The men were hungry, cold, dispirited. The prospect of a long winter in the wilderness where they found themselves was disheartening. As their spirits fell, Christopher's arose. He was possessed of an indomitable, cheerful fortitude. He fell to with an axe, chopping down trees and lopping off their branches, cheering his companions with his chatter, never complaining, doing more than his share of the work, and taking less than his share of the food.

For two weeks the threadbare soldiers worked at their cabins, up and down the streets that had been laid out over the hills. The shrill December wind, frequently filled with biting snow, cut through their thin clothes; many of them were without hats; many of them left little tracks of blood in the snow, where they waded barefooted at their rough labor.

All they had to live on for two weeks, while they were building the huts, was flour, mixed with water and baked into cakes, with now and then a strip of tough beef, or a box of spoiled fish. It was meager fare for men compelled to work hard all day, and sleep out on the frozen ground at night, with nothing to keep them warm but a few scraps of worn blankets and the open camp-fire. There was plenty of grumbling over it all, with now and then a dangerous outburst of dissatisfaction.

Philip Worth was one of the loudest in his complaints. He was willing enough to stand up and fight with powder and ball, but this slow endurance of hardships that promised to become much worse before they got better was more than his patience could stand. It was Little Chris who smoothed his temper at such times, coaxing him into better humor, or making him forget his sufferings by telling a jolly story, or getting Philip started on a narration of some of his own martial exploits; a device that was usually quite successful.

When the work began Christopher had a blanket

somewhat better than most of those in the company. He had taken good care of it. One morning when Philip Worth got up shivering from the snow where he had been sleeping, he perceived that Little Chris's blanket was gone. The boy was lying uncovered on the ground, blue and shaking with the cold.

"If any thief stole my blanket I'd kill him," growled Philip, scornfully, catching Christopher's eye.

Christopher, making a sign of silence, cocked his head toward one of their number who had been ailing for two or three days. The sick man lay asleep under Christopher's blanket. Philip said nothing; he only looked in a puzzled and surprised way at his chum. He was beginning, perhaps, to understand something about the manner of courage that Christopher possessed.

The houses were finished at last; rough log huts, with mud in the chinks, and log-and-mud chimneys. Sixteen men were assigned to each. There were no floors and no beds; not even straw to keep their bodies from the frozen ground.

It was late in the afternoon when the squad containing Philip and Christopher was ready to move into theirs. They built up a roaring fire in the fireplace, and were beginning to feel a little warmth, for the first time in two weeks, in spite of the wind that whistled through the chinks and about the crude door, when one of the number noticed that Chris-

topher was not with them. "Where's Christopher?" he asked.

"Blessed if I know," returned Philip. "Run away again, like as not." Philip had a habit of saying things he did not mean, for show.

A man lying in a blanket near the fire arose on an elbow. His cheeks were sunken, fever burned in his hollow eyes; fever, and anger. "If he's gone, he's gone to heaven," he murmured, in a rattling voice. "Little Chris isn't the man to run away from *this*." It was the sick man to whom Christopher had given his blanket.

Before Philip could justify himself in a reply, the door flew open, admitting a prodigious gust of cold wind, and Christopher stood inside. He was holding something tightly wrapped beneath his coat.

"Shut the door!" yelled Philip Worth. "It's cold enough in here without your letting in the whole north zone."

"All right, Phil," returned Christopher, cheerily. "I shut it as quick as I could, Phil, with both my hands full." He glanced about among the others with a bright smile of expectancy on his face. "I've brought you something, comrades," he said. "I've brought something for a little house-warming. I thought we ought to celebrate our moving in."

"A fine place to celebrate moving into," growled Philip Worth, as Christopher approached the fire, bearing the mysterious bundle hidden under his coat.

"Hold your tongue, if you can't use it civil," one

of the others retorted. "If you had some of Little Chris's spirit, you'd be better off, and so would we, Phil Worth!"

"Phil's right," quoth Christopner, briskly, seeing a storm-cloud gathering. "'Tain't much of a place, and I'm afraid 'tain't much of a celebration; but if it's the best we can do, what then? We'll only have to pretend a bit, that's all. Look here."

Kneeling down on the ground before the fire, he lowered the bundle from his coat into the light of the roaring blaze. He had brought a chicken, and a duck, and a quarter of ham, with a few potatoes tied up in a handkerchief.

A great shout went up at sight of the promised feast. "Where'd ye come by them, Little Chris?" cried Philip Worth, in immense good humor all at once. "Been prowling, eh?"

"Never you mind where I came by them, Phil Worth," laughed the boy. "I've had my eyes about me these days, and when we got through to-night with our work I made up my mind it was a good time for a little feast. I'll tell you this much, though: no one has come to any harm by this. I paid for what I took, and there's an end of it."

Philip Worth glowered at him. "You young jackanapes! Do you mean to tell us that you've known all this time where you could lay hands on all this food, and left us to starve without bringing it in? If I had my way I know how I would punish such selfishness."

"'Tis lucky enough for us that 'twas not the other way around, and we lay here starving waiting for *you* to bring such food in to us," snapped one of the soldiers. "And what's more, Phil Worth, if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head you'll get none of this, for we'll not stand to hear Little Chris so abused by any man."

"Phil is only fooling," interposed Christopher.

"Yes ; just the way you were fooling at German-town," sneered Phil.

"In Heaven's name, cease this bickering and give me food," came a voice from the ground. "I'm starving ; can't you see that I'm starving?" It was the sick man who lay in Christopher's blanket.

They scarcely waited for the food to cook before they tore it into portions and handed it around. They devoured it like famished wolves, without speaking a word until it was gone. There was only the sound of human teeth against bones, and the smacking of lips, and heavy breathing that sounded like the growls of animals. It was no time at all until there was not a scrap of flesh left on the bones, which were put aside for the soup they would make on the morrow.

That night they went to sleep in better spirits than they had known for many days ; even Philip Worth was in a good humor. Philip was awakened in the morning by a poke from Christopher. Lifting himself on an elbow, and rubbing his eyes, he saw Christopher sitting bolt upright, looking toward

the soldier to whom he had given his blanket. "He's gone," whispered Christopher.

"You've lost your wits," returned Philip, scornfully. "He's there, big as life. What ails ye, lad? Did ye fetch a bottle last night that ye did not pass round?"

"I know he's there," answered Christopher. "But he's dead!"

Philip sat up with a start. "How long has he been dead?"

"I don't know. I just woke up and went over to see if he was all right, and found him—that way. I didn't know what to do."

"He don't need that blanket any more," snarled Philip, reaching over and snatching it from the dead body.

Christopher made no comment. "He won't need this, either," he said, presently, handing something to Philip wrapped in his handkerchief.

"What's this?" asked the other, surprised, fumbling at the knotted ends of the rag.

"Nothing," said Christopher, still gazing thoughtfully at the dead soldier. "Only something I had left over from last night. I was going to give it to him, but now he won't need it."

"Reckon he had too much last night, and that's what he died of," observed Philip, coolly unwrapping the handkerchief and examining the contents. "Why, you little villain, you ate nothing at all of your ration!" he cried.

"I was saving it for him," Christopher explained, simply.

Philip stared at him. "Here," he said, reluctantly. "I won't take it."

"I wish you would," urged Christopher. "I get along very well on what they give us. You see, you're bigger than I am, and need more to eat. Please keep it."

A strange moisture appeared in Philip's eye. "We'll go halvers on it, anyway," he suggested.

"All right," agreed Christopher.

"Hadn't we better eat it now?" Philip went on.

"You can," said Christopher, putting his own share in his shirt. "I'm going to get some more wood and build up the fire."

The first death among them had a variety of effects. Some were cast down by the event; others were thrown into a state of desperate gayety, foreseeing their own possible fate; some pitied the victim; some rejoiced for his escape. Philip Worth was observed to be less morose and surly; although whether it was the ominous visit of death to their little band that had awakened him to thoughts of his own future life, or whether it was an insight into the soul of Christopher Martin that softened him it might be difficult to say.

The next day no rations were distributed but a handful of sour beans to each man. Those in the hut with Christopher were better off than most, having had a comparatively hearty meal the night

before. But when two more days passed with no food excepting some more of the sour beans, they began to lose strength and courage.

Philip Worth was inclined to be rebellious against conditions. "What did they bring us here for, if they are not going to feed us, now they have got us here?" he complained. "I might be at home all this time, with my own people, warm and with at least enough to eat, instead of starving and freezing here in this wilderness. Why don't they get us food? Why don't they send us some blankets? If they want us to keep on fighting for them, why don't they think of us a little and give us what we need to keep body and soul together? I suppose they think that when a soldier is not fighting a battle he crawls into a cocoon and sleeps like a butterfly until the next battle." By "they" he meant the Continental Congress. "I'll tell you what, for one: if we don't get food before night I am going to take my leave of this sink of misery."

Christopher, sidling up to him, handed him a little package, slyly drawing it from his coat. "Wait," he said. "Don't give up. Stay with us, Phil. If the British should attack we'd need you."

"Aye, if the British should attack I'd stay fast enough; but as for lying around idle and starving to death, it is quite another matter," retorted Philip Worth. However, he took the package, which contained the remnant of the food which Christopher had saved from the previous evening.

"Lad, lad," he said to the boy, when he had munched the last of it. "You should have kept this for yourself and not have been giving it to me. Why, ye eat barely nothing at all, boy."

"That's all right, Philip," returned Christopher, cheerfully. "You are so much bigger than I that you need more to eat. I am getting along all right."

Days crept into weary nights; the stars dragged themselves through their dark rounds until they emerged again in gray day, and still the soldiers of liberty clung to life in their little bare huts. The weather was ferocious; it almost seemed as though nature conspired with the British against the patriots. There was scarcely a day when snow did not drive through camp on the north wind; the sun rarely shone; there was no cheer under the leaden sky. The houses were cold; the wind cut through the mud-smeared chinks. There was nothing on the floor to keep them from the frozen ground. They had plenty of fire-wood, but their chimney did not draw well; either all the smoke blew into the room, or all the heat rushed up the chimney. Their clothing, which many of them had worn since the spring before, was falling to pieces. Overcoats were scarce and poor, blankets were scarcer. Of new shoes there were none; many of the men wrapped straw about their feet for warmth when they went out on picket duty.

To fortify themselves against all this hardship the men had nothing. Every day something was

rationed among them—a little flour, a few potatoes, some boxes of old fish, usually spoiled, a scrap of lean, tough meat—but not enough to keep a man in comfort of body even under the best conditions; not enough for a lazy man's diet in summer. It was not long, in those circumstances, before actual famine began to be apparent in the ranks. Men staggered in their walk, staring dazedly ahead of them into the drifting snow-laden air; their bodies were gaunt, their cheeks filled with strange lines and tensions and shadows. They began to sicken and die. Over half the force was not fit for service.

The men had scarcely finished their huts before they were set to work on a series of forts which Washington planned and threw up to prevent an attack by the British, which he was in dread of, for he could not have made much of a resistance. The men grumbled, some of them, but it was lucky for them that they had work to do which took their minds from their troubles.

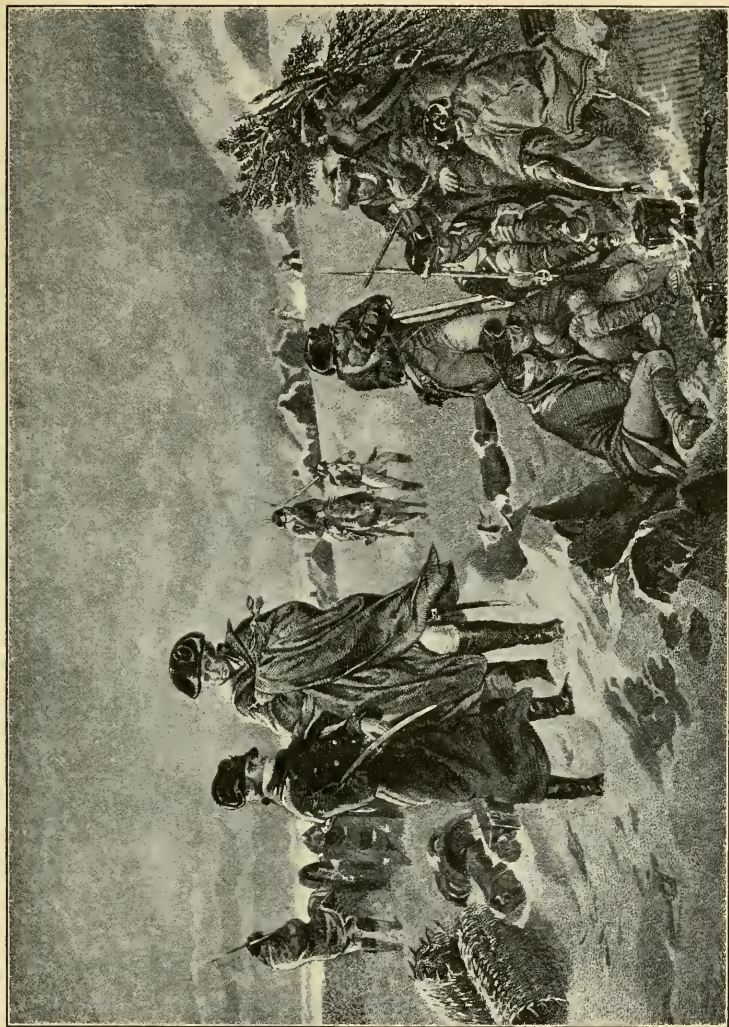
Squads were sent out to bring in wood, and to gather forage from neighboring farms. The farmers had little left; most of it had been bought by the English, and the countrymen did not care to sell to the Continentals, for the Continental money was not worth much.

Christopher Martin was the life and the soul of the squad with which he lived. He was always cheerful, and never lost his patience. If too many days went by without bringing a fairish meal, Christopher would

give his belt a pull and make some joke about it. "There won't be much for the British to hit next year, if this keeps up," he would say. "I am getting thin at a powerful fast clip." Or : "I'll soon be like the horse the farmer trained to live on a pound of straw a day. Just as the animal had learned how to get along on it, he up and died on the farmer."

Christopher spent his spare time when off picket or fatigue duty in knocking together rough furniture for their hut. He made a table and some stools and benches out of wood cut from the hills, splitting trunks for the flat table-tops ; he stuck up bedsteads, and filled them with dried grass and leaves, which he gathered at great pains ; dressing the tops of them over with fir boughs from some fir trees that he found in a hollow a mile or more from camp. He had to get permission to leave camp, but it was not difficult to do so.

Frequently when he came back from expeditions in search of some little added comfort for their quarters he would bring food, as he had done on the night of their house-warming. He never would eat any of it himself, always telling them that he had eaten his share on the way. They all wondered where he could find anything to eat, for no one else had such success. Finally they learned that a cousin of his lived five miles away, who had a hidden cellar in which he kept some things that he did not want the army to get hold of. Christopher made this trip of ten miles whenever he had time to spare.



IT WAS BREAKING WASHINGTON'S HEART TO SEE THEM SUFFER



In the middle of January the second member of their little party died. Two days later seven of them were in the hospital. It seemed strange to Christopher that any of them were alive. He wondered at his own endurance. After the first week he felt that he would not be able to survive another day ; but the days came and went, leaving him still alive and with strength enough to do what he had to do. He got used to being cold all the time ; got used to being hungry all the time ; got used to being tired all the time. He got so used to it that it began to seem to him that life had always been like that ; that there had never been anything but this slow, creeping, dull, dead existence since he could remember. He did not think, he did not feel, he did not worry ; he only dragged through hour after hour, waiting for something to change. But all the time he kept up a cheerful countenance for his comrades. He felt that he could do that much, if he could not stand up bravely and look into the muzzles of an enemy's guns.

Philip Worth was not getting along so well. Physically, his condition was good enough, but his temper grew more and more sour. He grumbled at everything and everybody ; he began to be abusive ; he began to bully the others, and make them stand around. He took a blanket by force from one of the squad ; he made another give up a coat. He bullied them into giving him more than his share of food. He was quite a tyrant in a small way, and was be-

coming unendurable, when something happened to change his mood.

Christopher came in one afternoon from one of his exploring expeditions empty-handed, but filled with intense excitement. He found Philip standing in front of the fire, holding forth to a company of men, many of whom had wandered in from other huts near by. "What do they think a soldier is made of?" Phil was saying, his face distended with passion, and his arms working frantically through the air. "What do they think we can live on? The dried blood of our old wounds? The frost that gathers in our hair when we sleep? Do they think we can break our frozen fingers off like sugar sticks and suck them for our life? Why don't they feed us? Why don't they send us some clothing? Because they don't want to, that's why. Because they have something to do that they think is of more importance. Because they have their own bellies and purses to line, every one of them, from the President of Congress down to the negro porter that sweeps out after their meetings. Do you know that the roads are lined with food meant for us, that lies rotting because nobody will take the trouble to get it to us? Do you know that there are hogsheads and barrels and crates and bundles of food and clothing going to waste in ditches and behind hedges, because nobody is willing to turn over a dollar to get a horse to fetch it in? How much longer do you think I'm going to stay here and freeze? Not much, I can

tell you. Look at these fat officers lolling around their quarters, living on the best of the land, with wine to wash it down with ! What do they care for us, who are starving to death out in the trenches, so long as they have something to put in their stomachs and a bit of wine to set their fingers tingling ? They are all alike ; one is as bad as another, and General Wash ——”

He got no farther. “Stop !” screamed Christopher Martin, bouncing in front of the furious Philip. “Hold your uncivil tongue, Phil Worth, and listen.” Worth, too surprised to resent the sudden interruption, stood staring at him with open eyes and ears.

“Listen to me, while I tell you what I just saw,” Little Chris went on. “I wasn’t going to tell about it, but perhaps I’d better. When I was coming up through the woods just now I heard somebody in the bushes, talking. He seemed to be in great distress. I thought perhaps one of the men had given out and fallen in the snow, or that he had frozen his feet, or that the cold might have dazed him, so I turned aside and went toward him. What do you think I saw ?”

“What ?” asked three or four.

“I saw a man kneeling in the snow. He was praying to Almighty God to help his men. There were tears in his eyes. Do you know who that man was ?”

“Washington ?” submitted one.

“George Washington !” Christopher went on.

"You stand here and say things about him," he said, turning full on Philip Worth. "You think he doesn't care so long as he is in a house with plenty to eat. I tell you, it is breaking his heart to have us suffering like this. I tell you, he would trade places with all of us this second, if it would do any good; if we could all go to live in the house by his coming out here to live in a hut. I tell you that he is having a harder time than we are having. Do you suppose that there is a single man that dies but what General Washington says to himself, 'I might have prevented that'? Do you suppose he hears the sick groaning in the hospital without saying to himself, 'They are there because they are loyal to me'? It's little enough he is asking of us, to stay here and be true to him during this winter. He's carrying more than any of us can know. He's got the whole burden of the war on his shoulders now. If it wasn't for him, the British would be overrunning our country right now, and half the colonies would be back under the king. You know it yourself, Philip Worth. If there is anything we can do to help him, we ought to do it, and thank God for the chance. If it helps him to stay here, and make the most of it, it is doing little enough. And here you stand and talk about running off! Maybe I ran once when the bullets were flying, but it's going to take a little more than snow and a cold wind to drive me away this time."

No one said a word. Some of the men who had come from other cabins sneaked out and went back

to their own fires. Philip Worth, standing staring into the flames for a space, reeled over and sprawled out on his couch.

"But I can't stand it," he whined, burying his head in his arms. "I can't stand it."

Christopher slipped over and sat beside him on the pile of leaves. "What can't you stand, old Phil?" he asked, putting a gentle hand on the great bony shoulders.

"Oh, the cold, the cold. It bites my bones. It gnaws them; it never stops. I do nothing but ache, ache, ache, morning and night, hour after hour, day in and day out. I can't get warm. My feet, look at my feet! Frozen three times; I can scarce bear my weight on them. And the hunger! Oh, God, I am so hungry."

"'Tain't going to be much longer, Phil," Little Chris coaxed.

"It ain't; it can't," Worth echoed. "I can't stand it! We're on picket to-night. How can I go on picket? I can't walk; I can't stand; I am freezing in the hut. It is more than human flesh can stand."

"I'll take your place on sentinel duty, Phil. Nobody 'll mind."

"Will you, Little Chris? Will you?" eagerly.

"Always. You stay inside and keep comfortable."

"Comfortable!" echoed Philip, sarcastically. "Lots of comfort I'll get anywhere hereabouts!"

"It isn't so bad inside as it is out, though," Christopher suggested.

Philip made no answer. He merely rolled over on his bed and curled up, like a cat, trying to keep himself warm.

There was no phase of the life in Valley Forge so terrible as standing sentinel. Often barefooted, always only half clad, the soldiers were compelled to wait out in the snow with no protection from the icy blast. It was work that had to be done; there was always a chance that Howe would move out from Philadelphia and attack; there was always the need to watch for spies who tried to get into the camp and learn conditions, or stir up mutiny among the distressed troops. The officers made the task as easy as they could. The sentinels were left on duty for only an hour at a time, and were called upon as infrequently as possible.

It was eight that night when Christopher's turn came. Philip was supposed to follow him. "Worth is sick to-night," he told the guard officer, as he marched out to his post on the line of breastworks. "I told him I would take his turn."

It was a bitter night. Not a star shone in the sky to give any light. A savage wind whipped out of the northeast, driving snow before it, wrapping Christopher's ragged garments about his legs, piercing him to the quick. His toes were naked in the snow, escaping from his torn shoes. He stooped from time to time to warm them with fingers scarcely

less cold. He had to take care in handling his musket lest his wet fingers freeze to the steel. He stood with back hunched against the blast, hands in pockets, a handkerchief tied about his chin and ears, shivering and miserable.

He thought of his warm fire at home ; of his mother and sisters, ready always to cook him something warm and wrap him in his snug bed if he should return. He thought of his stout old father, who had urged him to go to war, and of his little brother, in whose eyes he was a hero. The thought of the brother brought a flush of hot shame to his cheeks. What if the lad should learn of his behavior at Germantown ? There would be no escape from the young lad's condemnation ; his judgment would be severe and immovable. . . . He took off his hat, placed it on the ground, and stood on it, to keep his toes out of the snow.

The two hours passed, and Christopher crept back to his cabin. The others were silent in sleep ; or in what approached sleep—a dull stupor of low vitality ; a sluggishness of mind and body, the result of their suffering. He crept into his bunk beside Philip. He felt pitifully weak ; he had never felt quite so weak and forlorn. It seemed to him that he would never be able to stir a muscle again ; they were as stiff and heavy and insensible as leather. The leg that Philip had hit with a musket at Germantown ached bitterly.

As he passed into slumber, it was more as though

the soul left and floated out of his body than it was like a loss of unconsciousness in the usual manner of sleep. All night long he dreamed of his home, and awoke in the morning with a sense of having been there. He could not rid himself of the picture ; for the first time he felt tempted to steal away and go home, if only for a week or two of rest and recovery. But he stifled the temptation, remembering the sight he had seen in the woods the day before ; remembering the debt he had to pay for Germantown.

Philip Worth was like a child thenceforth ; like a spoiled and pouting sick child. He was sullen and surly, giving short answers to every one excepting Christopher, before whom he seemed to be ashamed. He lay in his bunk throughout the day and night, moving only to warm himself now and then at the fire, or to help himself to the rations that were brought and heated at the fireplace—you could scarcely say they were cooked, for the starving men would not wait for that.

Matters seemed to be going from bad to worse. In the entire army there was not a man who was not suffering from hardship and exposure ; who had not been frost-bitten, or whose health had not broken under the ordeal. You would have seen blood in half the tracks in the trampled snow through the rough village of cabins. You would have seen men like living skeletons stalking back and forth in clothing the very sight of which would have made you shiver in such weather. Warmth was impossible ; sometimes

the men were less cold than others, but they were always cold. They had no place to go to get warm; distant spring was their only hope.

Surprising that they endured it all with any patience! Surprising that they all did not steal away by night—as many of them did! Surprising that there was one company left to face the terrors of that desolate winter! It was Washington that held them; the lofty spirit of the man; the brave, determined devotion of his example among them. Officers continually moved about the camp, cheering up the men, expostulating with those who were in mutinous mood, coaxing, arguing with them. Many left, but more stayed.

After the night on sentinel duty when he came home with such a strange, new feeling of exhaustion, Christopher Martin had many returns of the sensation. A half hour of exposure in the open air was enough to make him numb from head to foot; to give him a peculiar, floaty feeling, as though his soul were absent from his body. One day he caught a reflection of himself in a pool of water, which had been cleared of ice so that the men might get drinking water. The sight he saw sent him back on his heels with a shock of surprise and apprehension; for a moment he believed that he had beheld his own ghost.

The thought grew upon him. He was his own ghost. He was wandering about on the cold surface of the world unburied. There were so many ghosts, he fancied, that no one had noticed him particularly.

A strange surprise the British would have, if they came out to attack, and found themselves fighting an army of ghosts !

With the feeling came the alluring picture of his home. What harm would it do if he were to take an unasked leave for a few days, and recuperate there ? He would not have to be gone for more than a month—or two, at the most. No one would miss him ; he would be back in time for any fighting that might take place.

He was sitting beside the fireplace late on an afternoon in February, struggling against the impulse to take a vacation ; fighting it down angrily, when his attention was attracted to Philip, who had suddenly raised himself from his bunk, and was sitting on the edge of it, with his long, thin shanks reaching to the ground. "What's the use in all this ?" Philip was demanding, savagely, blowing into his knuckles to keep them warm—his breath showed in a little gray cloud, so cold was it inside the four log walls. "What's the use in all this ? Why should I wait here and starve, and freeze ? I am not doing any good. I'm going home. I'm going home. Who will go home with me ? Little Chris, will you go home with me ?"

Chris sprang to his feet in unheralded rage. "No," he cried. "No, nor you won't go, either !" He made a bound, leaped full upon Philip's broad breast, and bore him back on the bed, in the suddenness of the attack. "Curse you !" he snarled, dig-

ging his fingers into the hairy throat of his chum. "Curse you for a coward! You won't go home either! You'll stay here until the candle is burnt out, or I'll find out why!"

The others, seeing little Chris throwing himself on the huge Philip, sprang after him in alarm and pulled him off, expecting to see him shortly beaten for his temerity. But Philip only lay back on the bed wide-eyed, staring at Christopher, and making his lips go silently on some syllables. Christopher sank back by the fire, weak and trembling.

That night it was his turn to go on sentinel duty. There had been no food all day. They were expecting it any minute, but Christopher could not wait. Picking up his musket, he started to go out. As he passed Philip on the bunk he stopped and leaned over him. "Phil," he said. "Old Phil! You won't go, will you? You'll stick it out. I'm going to stand your turn on sentry, Phil. You won't go while I'm gone, will you?" But Philip would not answer him.

He floundered out into the night. All day it had been storming; the storm had waxed into a blizzard now. Christopher could scarcely see the forms of the huts lining the streets as he struggled through the fresh drifts to report for duty. The snow snapped in his face and stung his eyes; it was a harsh night for any man to be abroad, to say nothing of one-half starved, whom the winter had already worn down desperately.

His beat was on a bleak angle of the entrenched lines, exposed to every wind. Deep drifts had formed behind the bank of earth, more than half covering a field-piece that stood hunched across the top of the works, looking harmless enough against the force of the storm.

"No British to-night," said Christopher to himself, "and lucky enough it is. What with the wind blinding us, and the snow drowning our muskets, we could make but a sorry show against an enemy."

The last sentry had broken a rough path through the drifts, but Christopher had difficulty in following it back and forth. The tumbril of the gun served as a guiding post. From there he walked along close to the embankment until he came to an angle, which was the end of his beat, where he turned and paced back to the gun, time after time, time after time.

He did not feel the cold. He had been cold for so long that he had forgotten what it was to be warm. He did not feel tired, or weak. He did not feel anything; the old sensation of floating away from himself came over him after he had been pacing back and forth for a short time. He wandered up and down like one in a trance; from the gun to the angle; from the angle to the gun, over and over again.

One time when he arrived at the gun he did not turn at once to go back. "I'll stop here a minute," he said to himself. "I'll just stop here for a minute.

Nobody is coming." He leaned against the wheel of the cannon.

He was aware of being tremendously drowsy. He had never had such a desire to sleep. "None of that, my boy," he said to himself, and brought his eyes open with a jerk.

The lids closed again ; his head nodded. He was aroused by the snapping of the back of his neck when his head bobbed forward. "Here, Christopher," he warned himself, "this will never do. That's the way men feel when they are freezing to death. You'd better keep awake."

The better to keep awake, he started down his beat again, and staggered to the angle in the works. There he stopped again, and the drowsiness seized him.

He felt a hand on his arm. It was the sentry that had the beat next him. "Wake up, Little Chris," said the sentry. "You know what happens to sentries that go to sleep on post, don't you?"

"They freeze," answered Christopher.

"Or they are shot for it." Christopher was not afraid of being shot ; the strict rules of military discipline were not enforced in the Continental army. "They only freeze," he insisted.

"That's just as bad," the man replied. "Wake up."

Christopher stumbled back to the gun. He did not dare to stop now ; the desire to sleep was overpowering him even when he walked. He turned,

and hurried back to the angle, the other end of his beat, floundering in the drifts.

As he wheeled to return, a gust of wind struck him and swung him off his feet. He faltered a few steps, and plunged into the drift. It was wonderfully soft. He made up his mind that he would lie there for a minute ; just for a minute, to rest.

The next thing he knew he was being shaken violently, and some one was rubbing snow on the back of his neck. "Close squeeze, that," said a voice. "Another five minutes, and he would have been stiff."

"'Tis too soon to be sure now," said another. "Come, fetch him this way. Make him walk. Keep him walking. Halloo, there! Are you awake? Wake up! You are freezing to death, lad." Fingers gave his nose a prodigious tweek ; some one shook him again, and dragged him on his feet through the drifts.

He was before the door of his own hut before he was fully aware of what was taking place. "What's the matter? What has happened?" he asked, bewildered, when he recognized the spot.

"Picket relief found you asleep and freezing," they told him. "Here you are, now ; make yourself snug."

He opened the door and passed in. The fluttering fire on the hearth showed the bunks about the wall, and the rough table and stools he had made. He went toward the bunk where he slept with Philip Worth.

At the edge of it he stopped and gave a little start of surprise. The bunk was empty. "He's gone," murmured Christopher. "Old Phil is gone! Too bad! Too bad! Old Phil!"

With a deep sigh of exhaustion he threw himself upon the bunk and fell asleep. The blankets were gone, but he was too tired to notice that; too tired to have pulled them over him if they had been there.

One of the soldiers, stirring in the morning before the others, noticed that there was only one man in the bunk occupied by Philip and Christopher. He could not understand, and went to see which one it was.

"Hello, here," he called out. "Old Phil's gone!"

"Gone!" exclaimed two or three. "Gone where?"

"Off—home, I suppose." He bent over to see whether Christopher was awake; perhaps Little Chris might know something about it.

He straightened again quickly, turning a face of surprise and shock upon the others.

"What's the matter?" they cried.

"Little Chris," was the answer. "He's gone, too. Home."

The boy was dead.

That was the difference between the courage of Christopher Martin and of Philip Worth.

CHAPTER IX

THE MADNESS OF ANTHONY WAYNE

YOU have doubtless heard of "Mad Anthony" Wayne ; and you have doubtless always supposed that he was called "Mad Anthony" because of reckless daring in battle. Almost every one believes that is the reason he was called "Mad Anthony,"—and almost every one is wrong. General Wayne was as brave a soldier as ever fought, but he was most cautious and painstaking in his fighting. He never undertook to do anything without first weighing all the chances, and being quite certain that the balance was in his favor. He was not at all a Mad Anthony.

This is how he came to be called "Mad Anthony." It is rather interesting, and it shows how easy it is for little things to creep into the popular opinion concerning historical characters and lead to a misjudgment of them. There was a man in Wayne's army corps during the Revolution known as "Jemy the Rover." Jemy was a whimsical, simple-minded fellow, up to his pranks. One day General Wayne had him put in the guard-house for something he had done ; for Wayne was a strict officer who would stand no nonsense. When Jemy was released he asked a sergeant whether the general was "mad or

in fun." The sergeant replied: "The general has been very much displeased with your disorderly conduct, and a repetition of it will be followed by confinement and twenty-nine lashes, well laid on."

"Then," said Jemy, "Anthony is mad. Clear the coast for Mad Anthony's friend."

The soldiers, who loved their commander, took up the phrase and made a nickname of it, as men will when they are fond of another. To be called by a nickname usually proves that others like you. In a short time General Wayne came generally to be spoken of affectionately among the soldiery as "Mad Anthony"; the name spread through the army and into civil life, and it has endured until this day. But most people, as I have told you, believe that Wayne got it because of foolhardy bravery on the field of battle.

There were a number of incidents in his career as a soldier to make that mistaken theory easy to believe. He did things that thoughtless persons would consider evidence of recklessness. For instance: once, when he was in Georgia fighting the British and Tories, he unexpectedly came upon a force of them much larger than his own. They met in a narrow causeway through a swamp. The situation was critical; the Americans were in great danger of being exterminated. Wayne did not hesitate a moment, but ordered a charge, which so surprised the enemy that they broke and fled. That seemed like a foolish thing to do; but Wayne saw that it was the

only safe way. He was quite certain that his sudden charge would have the effect it did have.

He did precisely the same thing in Virginia. Lord Cornwallis, the British general who afterward was besieged and captured at Yorktown, was marching up and down the state doing what mischief he could. Wayne was following him with a small force, doing all he could to harass the British and prevent them from having too much their own way. One day he came popping out of a woods face to face with the entire British army, which outnumbered his own many to one. He made an instant charge, which so disconcerted Cornwallis that the English withdrew, and the American army was saved from almost certain destruction. "Mad Anthony has done it again," people said, when they heard of it; not stopping to think that the general's action was the most wise and prudent thing he could have done.

Many other stories are told concerning Wayne to fit the theory that he was a foolhardy fighter. People tell how he used to take a book with him when he went to councils of war in Washington's headquarters; how he would read the book in a corner, paying no attention to the discussion among the other generals until his opinion was asked, when he would shut the book on a finger and say: "Fight." That is not the truth of the matter. In the first place, Wayne was too well bred to behave in that fashion; and in the second place, he was too intelligent a man to take serious matters so lightly. It is true that he

often advised fighting when other commanders were opposed to it, but always for good reasons. And usually General Washington agreed with him.

When Lord Howe was retreating from Philadelphia to New York, for instance, Wayne urged the plan of following and offering battle, although all the other generals except Washington and Greene opposed it. Washington adopted the plan. The Americans followed, came upon the British at Monmouth, and the war might have ended right there in the capture of the entire British army if it had not been for the treachery of General Charles Lee, who ordered a retreat. Wayne did wonders that day; it was largely due to him that Lee's treachery did not result in a terrible disaster to the American arms.

But one of the bravest things he ever did was the storming of the British at Stony Point, on the Hudson, in 1779. It was a most heroic act he did on that summer night, as you will see when you have read this story; but Wayne had planned the entire affair to the smallest detail before he undertook it, and, unless some accident happened, knew what the result was going to be.

Stony Point is a high promontory jutting out into the Hudson River from the west shore about twelve miles below West Point, and thirty-five miles above New York. On three sides is the Hudson River; behind it, between the hill and the land, is a marsh covered by water at high tide. It was an important position, commanding the Hudson River at the

lower end of the Highlands, and controlling the more important position at West Point. King's Ferry, the principal route of travel from New England to the other colonies, landed immediately at the base of the hill. As long as the British held Stony Point, West Point was threatened, and the eastern colonies were almost entirely cut off from the western.

They had seized the place early in the summer of 1779, when it was being fortified by the Americans, and had greatly strengthened it. The crest and slopes of the hill were dotted with earthworks and redoubts, fourteen in number, mounting twenty-four guns. Two lines of abatis extended across the neck between the hill and the mainland. An abatis, as you probably know, is a sort of fence made of felled trees fixed close together in the earth in a long line, with their sharpened, tangled branches pointing in the direction from which an enemy is expected to advance. An abatis must be cleared away by the foe before they can advance, which gives the defenders of the position a splendid chance with cannon and muskets, and the advancing formation is pretty thoroughly broken up.

Beyond the second line of abatis was the marsh, through which ran a channel, originally deep enough for a rowboat. The Americans had built a dirt roadway across the marsh, filling the channel, to open the way to the ferry. The hill itself was steep and rough, naturally easy of defense. The works were held by six hundred of the best soldiers in the

British army, under the command of the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Johnson, of the Seventeenth British Regiment of Foot; a regiment with a long tradition of fighting behind them; brave lads, and stubborn.

Washington was in the Highlands with the American army, watching the British in New York City. He was very anxious to dislodge them from Stony Point. It was a big piece of work. He could think of no man better fitted for it than Anthony Wayne. Wayne at the time was in Pennsylvania. Washington sent for him, and placed him in command of the Light Infantry Corps, 1,350 strong, recently selected by Washington from the entire army. Picked men they were; strong, brave, tried soldiers.

There is a tradition that when Washington asked Wayne whether he would be willing to undertake an assault on Stony Point, Mad Anthony replied: "I would storm hell if your excellency would plan it." It is not necessary to believe that story; although Anthony Wayne felt that way toward his commander.

Wayne made many careful inspections of the position, going as close to it as he could; climbing hills in the neighborhood that gave him a view, and studying the location and strength of the forts and defenses until he knew what to expect on every inch of the formidable hill. At first General Wayne reported that he did not think a storm of the place was practicable, but later, when he talked it over again with Washington, he thought it might be done.

On the sixth of July Washington himself went to have a look at the situation. A few days later he submitted a plan of attack to Wayne, which the latter adopted with a few minor changes. The plan was to attack at night with two forces, one moving to the crest of the hill from the south side of the point, and the other to come from the north. Secrecy and surprise were the essentials of the plan. Only a few of the important officers of the corps knew what was in hand. A strict watch was kept by the Americans on the point to prevent any one from passing in or out, lest some inkling of what was about to happen should leak to the ears of the British. Light Horse Harry Lee scoured the country with one hundred and fifty scouts. I am sorry to tell you that he considered it necessary to kill all the dogs within three miles, so that their barking would not arouse the British on the important night when the troops were moving to the assault. That will give you an idea of what war is like; especially if you have a dog of your own.

The Light Infantry was in camp at a point in the Highlands, fourteen miles north of Stony Point. On July 15th General Wayne ordered all the battalions of the corps to form for parade in the morning, "fresh shaved and well powdered" and fully equipped and rationed. You must know that in those days the soldiers powdered their hair, which they wore long and tied behind with a ribbon. Wayne was a stickler for discipline and a military appearance. A

week before he had written to Washington : " I have an insuperable bias in favor of an elegant uniform." He knew that a natty soldier had a pride which would make him fight better than a slovenly one ; and he knew that his men had that in hand which would require all their fighting ability.

High noon on the sixteenth of July ; a hot, sultry day. The thirteen hundred and fifty stood in serried lines, " fresh shaved and well powdered," with the sun glinting from their bayonets, the crack corps of the Continental army. Wayne and his staff had been down the line, examining muskets, looking into haversacks, with a word of praise for each soldier who showed especial neatness, whose hair was powdered whitest, whose face was most cleanly shaved, or whose musket was most speckless ; and a scowl of reproof to the few who did not show the proper pride.

The men, standing in line with eyes forward, were waiting for the command to break ranks, thinking of their dinners, impatient to relieve themselves from the hot buttoned-up uniforms, when an order came ; but not the order they had expected. " Forward, march," said General Wayne.

" Forward, march !" The command was taken up ; and the lines wheeled into columns and stepped off, swinging in step across the parade ground.

Where were they to march to ? What was ahead of them ? Not a man in the ranks knew. Was it a drill ? Were they going to make camp elsewhere ?

Or were they starting out to find and fight an enemy? No one could answer.

For three miles they marched through the sweltering heat southward to Fort Montgomery. But they did not stop there. They swung off into a gorge between two long mountain ridges, where their route was a wilderness trail along which they passed in single file. On all hands was dense, primeval forest and a tangle of brush; only the little path penetrated the wilderness, swinging up-hill and down-dale. Wild birds flew away in alarm at the sight of the long line of silent marching men; squirrels hastened into the tallest trees and barked excitedly from behind the shelter of leaf-grown limbs.

The order ran along the line that no man was to leave the ranks on any pretext, unless accompanied by a commissioned officer, under penalty of death. The soldiers were puzzled. Why all this precaution? Why all this mystery?

Throughout the hot afternoon they clambered in silent file along the mountain trail, crossing the bend of a ridge at last and coming out in a valley, a mile and a half from Stony Point. Only once during the long, hot march, had they stopped to rest. It was now eight o'clock at night.

There, when they rested under the deepening twilight, the men were told what they were going to be called upon to do. Do not believe that among them all there was one dismayed; that there was one who was not glad and eager when he was informed that

they were going to march out into the darkness of the approaching night and storm the British fort—"Little Gibraltar," as they called it. They were the picked men of a brave army of men ; the cream of the Continental forces.

Nine, ten, eleven o'clock came and went. The men, "fresh shaved and well powdered," fretted and fidgeted, impatient to be off to the fray. Not a man was permitted to leave the ranks. The suspense was wearing them to a wire edge. Why did the ball not begin? Where was Wayne? Was the plan given up?

Wayne was out at the point, looking over the ground for the last time, making certain of all the approaches, satisfying himself that their project was not known to the enemy, exercising every possible last precaution. For that was the manner of madness that was Anthony Wayne's.

Eleven-thirty, and the order came; "Fall in!" Out into the silent night, soft-footed, without exchanging a whisper, with only an occasional clank of steel rising above the steady muffled tread of many feet, the column moved; moved to death and to glory.

They marched with empty guns; no man was to load his musket. It was silent work they had ahead of them. They must creep as close as they could upon the enemy before he became aware of their presence; that was the only chance. Forewarned, the six hundred Englishmen in the high-perched

ramparts of the point, with their twenty-four guns, could exterminate the thirteen hundred Americans before they could come within striking distance. So the work must be done with the bayonet ; there was no other chance. It was ordered that if any man left the ranks, or loaded his musket, the officer next him should slay him on the spot, so necessary was secrecy.

At the foot of the hill they stopped. Black and shaggy it loomed above them. They could hear the faint tramping of sentries ; a gleam or two of light from some dying camp-fire, or the quarters of an officer, shone down through the thick shadows of the hillside. The calm and silent night brooded over it all, holding no hint of what was about to burst forth,—no hint save the thronging ranks of men, “fresh`shaved and well powdered,” fretting at the foot of the hill.

Swiftly, under a plan arranged and agreed upon before, the force was divided into three columns ; one to move around and attack from the north ; another to advance from the south, and a third to go forward across the causeway against the center. This third body, the smallest of the three, was to march with loaded muskets and begin a brisk fire so soon as the British opened on the others. Wayne wanted to make the British think that the main attack was coming from in front, so that they would be drawn away from the flanks, and not pay so much attention to the two larger forces. Another instance of his “madness.”

In advance of each of the two principal columns of attack were placed one hundred and fifty picked men. Twenty, selected from the hundred and fifty for peculiar courage and coolness, were to go ahead with muskets slung and tools in their hands to clear a way through the abatis for the following soldiers.

Do you imagine it was hard to find twenty men willing to occupy this post, so dangerous that the little squad was called a "forlorn hope"? Not a bit of it! The men were clamorously eager for the honor; young officers quarreled for the chance to lead the forlorn hope, and the command of it had to be settled by lot.

The force, divided, marched away in its several directions. Black night overhead, looking down, saw the long columns winding forward in silence; saw the British sentinels lounging up and down their beats in quiet security; saw the sleeping garrison, and gave no sign. Only a frightened night bird now and then uttered a cry of terror as it winged through the shadowy sky; but the sentinels paid no heed. Night birds are foolish creatures at best, likely to be startled by anything, or nothing. . . . But it was well that Light Horse Harry's men had killed all the dogs in the neighborhood. Perhaps if you had lived there in those days, and had understood, you would have been willing to spare your own pet in the country's cause.

Swiftly, silently, under the shadows of the trees,

marched the armed men. Black ghosts they were, scarcely raising sound enough with their careful footsteps to be heard by themselves. Only a slight, low rustle, like a night wind passing through the trees, or the murmur of the tide creeping up the shore.

General Wayne went with the right column, attacking from the south. They moved onward to the river. Colonel Fleury, a French officer, was in command. Each man had a piece of white paper fastened to his hat so that friends would be known to each other in the hand to hand attack.

They reached the river. They could see the dark outlines of some of the enemy's works high on the hill above them. They moved toward the hill. The lapping mutter of the tide, the occasional rustle of leaves in languid puffs of air that breathed through the hot night, were the only sounds in the still air besides the mumble of their tread. Not a word was spoken; the men breathed softly, as though such a slight noise as that would betray them. Their one chance lay in a surprise; there must not be much time between the moment when they should be first seen by the enemy, and the moment when they should scale the last parapet and plant their bayonets in the breasts of the defenders.

The twenty men of the "forlorn hope," stealing ahead along the margin of the river, came to a stretch of water that reached far across the marsh, and hesitated for a moment. The tide had run in since General Wayne had been there for a last look

at the ground. They knew that to enter the water was to be heard by the British sentinels and to bring down upon them the fire of the bristling hill. Not that they cared for themselves—they expected to pay with their lives for the honor of the post to which they had been chosen ; but they were afraid that, if they drew the fire too soon, they would not have time to complete the work of clearing the way for those who followed.

They did not stop long. With a jerk of the head as a sign to follow, the leader of the little band strode in, splashing the water in a white apron that tinkled down ahead of him with a rattling whisper of drops, and the others followed.

A sharp spot of light leaped out of the night, and the snap of a shot rang across the marsh. A British sentinel had heard them, and fired. Another shot ; the alarm was spreading. The “forlorn hope” hurried forward, followed by the long line of shadows.

A shot here and there from the ridge ; the sound of startled cries ; excited commands ! The British were astir, and rushing to their posts. Wayne, waving a short-handled spear, which he carried in lieu of his sword, urged haste in low tones. But there was no need. The men were hastening.

Suddenly a welcome sound smote upon their ears. It was the rattle of the muskets of the column that Wayne had sent over the causeway to make the British think the main attack was coming from that direction. They were doing their part ; they had

come up in time, and responded to the signal ; the first fire of the English.

Now quick fire leaped along the hill in sputtering fringes, marking the several works, and musket balls snarled through the air. Crashing through the popping musketry leaped the bellow of great guns ; the hurrying men could hear the crash of the balls through the trees, and their scream as they rushed overhead.

The twenty were at the first abatis, hacking away with axes to clear a path for their comrades. Just as the young hunter fires into brush where he hears the rustle of a rabbit, so the British aimed at the crackling noise of the pioneers, chopping at the felled trees. One, two, three, a half dozen of the busy men lurched and fell, found by the bullets sent hissing through the dark ; but the others worked on.

Only for a minute did the advancing column check its speed at the fringe of heavy brush. The stout fellows who were left of the twenty, wielding their axes, broke through one barrier and started on a run for the next, followed by the thin, dark flood of streaming Continentals.

Beside them, watchful, eager, teeming with compressed energy, but quite cool and calm, hurried Wayne, swinging his short spear.

The "forlorn hope"—or what was left of it—was at the second abatis. The noise of the British muskets on the crest had risen to an incessant rattle, punctuated by the heavier boom of the cannon.

Down by the causeway, in the British front, the Americans were answering briskly with two hundred muskets.

The long, dark line of the right column of attack pushed forward in silence, broken only by the sobs and groans of the sore hit, and the sharp gasp of their breathing; for they had already struck the slope, and were climbing it on the run.

You have seen a little stream of water running over dry dust; it stops for an instant, melts away into the ground, gathers head, twists forward, hesitates, and so gains its way along; losing water but gaining ground. So it was with the head of this stream of men at the second abatis.

The gallant band of pioneers, worming their way into the abatis, dwindled, until all but three lay among the hewn limbs of the trees that formed the obstacle. Those coming after picked up their axes and fell to, making further progress, only to be toppled down in turn.

The British on the hill, seeing them gathering behind the abatis, called down to them, taunting and jeering them, believing they would not be able to penetrate.

Wayne, pressing into the van, stood upon a limb, directing, encouraging, his eyes gleaming in the fire of the guns on the crest. His men, glancing at him, fell to with greater fury, and the last trunks and limbs of the huge fence were swept away.

But where was Wayne? At one instant he had

stood in the breach, encouraging them ; in another instant, he had disappeared.

"They've killed him !" cried a voice. "I saw him fall."

"Hit in the head," cried another. "I saw ; I know how they tumble when they get it in the head."

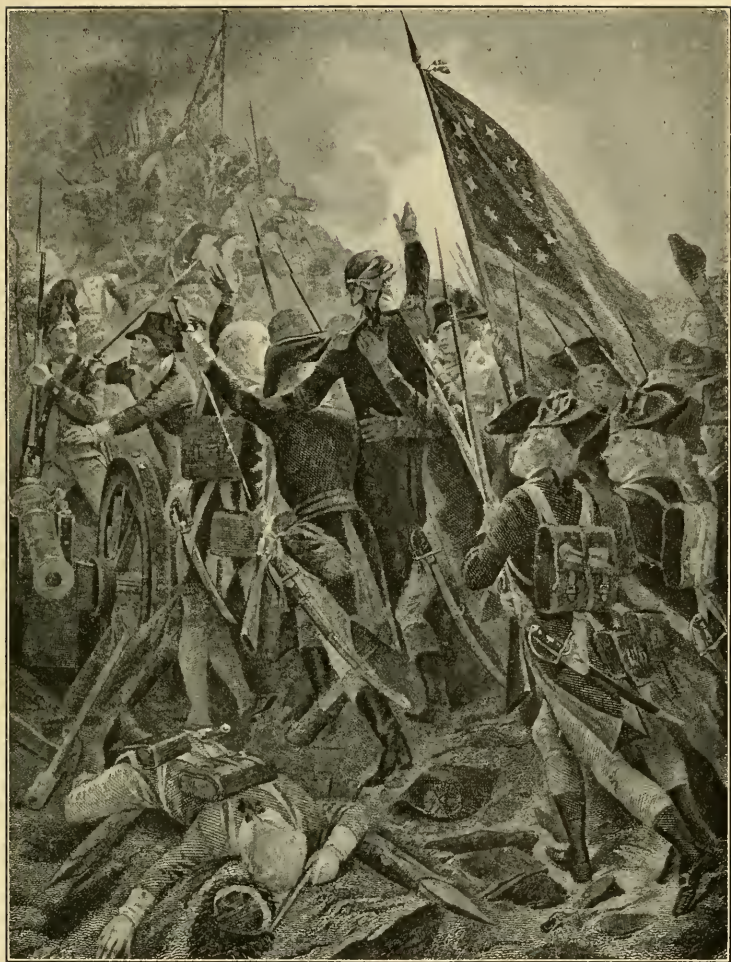
"On, my brave men, on !" came another voice. "Forward ! Forward !" It was the voice of Anthony Wayne, but he was lying wounded upon the ground.

With a curse the Continentals rushed onward, to avenge their commander upon the enemy.

His aides bent over the fallen man. Blood, gushing from a wound along the scalp, poured over his face. He was dazed ; he blinked up at them, brushing away the warm blood "Carry me into the fort," he said. "Let me die in the fort."

They bound his head with two twists of a neckerchief, lifted him on their shoulders, and carried him in the thronging column of men.

Up, up went the Americans, winding across the slopes like a great, grim-headed snake, silent and threatening, twisting around great boulders, coiling to avoid clumps of bushes, swerving to one side or the other to escape plunging into little gullies, ever rising higher and higher along the deadly slope toward the forts fringed with death-spitting fire. Never a word was said ; there was only the quick breathing of the men, the cries and gasps of those who were hit.



"CARRY ME INTO THE FORT," HE SAID



The British had ceased their shouting now. These reckless men that kept coming on against hot-tongued death were not to be jeered at. They must be stopped before it was too late ; there was no time to think of anything but the strict business of making them stop. And it was not to be done with jeering.

The figure of a man appeared on the brink of the parapet, outlined against the glare of the British fire ; he was waving a sword, beckoning those behind to follow. It was Colonel Fleury, the Frenchman who had come to America to help fight his ancient foe, the British.

Another figure sprang up beside him, and another ; half a dozen ; a dozen. Among them was the shadow-picture of two men carrying a third, who waved a short handled spear about his head. It was Wayne on the shoulders of his aides.

"The fort is ours ! The fort is ours !" The cry went up from a score of throats. Exhilarating words ! It was the cry that had been agreed upon as the watchword, to be given when the storming party had gained the inside of the fort, and not before. It meant victory to those who still clambered up the hill.

"The fort is ours ! The fort is ours !" came an echoing cry. But it was no echo. It was the other column, that had advanced from the left ; they also had gained the fort. So well had Anthony Wayne laid the plans for his foolhardy undertaking that his

recklessness was working out just as it should have worked out. Great work for a madcap, wasn't it?

There is little more to tell. The stream of triumphant men spouted into the fort. Bayonets were plunged into the breasts of the enemy, still struggling with bulldog courage to save the fort; they were swept hither and thither by the eddying currents of the victorious torrent. Presently they began to cry for quarter: "Mercy, dear Americans!" they said, throwing down their arms and surrendering.

That was the way Stony Point was captured by Wayne's Light Infantry at midnight on July 15, 1779. I think you must see pretty clearly now that the fight was no madcap venture on the part of Anthony Wayne. It was a case of thorough planning carried out with a bravery that not every one could understand; and with a valor and discipline on the part of the soldiers that a merely harum-scarum brave man could not have inspired in his troops.

As for Mad Anthony Wayne, he did not die of the wound in the head, which was only a glancing blow from a musket ball, but lived to fight many more fights, the last of which was a famous fight with the Indians at Fallen Timber, Indiana; and to die like any man of peace, of the rheumatism. And the next time any boy talks to you about Mad Anthony Wayne, you can set him right about it.

CHAPTER X

A LOYAL DESERTER

ABOUT the bravest thing Sergeant-Major John Champe ever did was to desert. Sergeant-Major John Champe did so many brave things, first and last, that it is difficult to pick out the one that was really the most courageous; but when you have heard the story I think you will agree with me that his desertion was the bravest of them all. Not because he ran the risk of being shot if he should be captured, or because he ran the risk of being shot if the British found out why he had deserted, but because he was called upon to make his comrades and close pals in the patriot army believe that he had turned traitor. That was the hard part of it for John Champe, sergeant-major. He had put his life on a hazard often enough not to mind the chance of losing it; but he had made a proud name for himself as a soldier, and it took nerve and determination to shatter his reputation by an act that could not be explained for a long time; that might never be explained, if he came to his death meanwhile.

Traitors were especially hated and feared in the patriot army at the time John Champe deserted.

Arnold had just been found out in his plot to turn West Point over to the British in New York City, and had fled to them. André was a prisoner in the American camp. You remember about André, the handsome and popular young English officer who was captured by three American soldiers in the woods near the Hudson as he was going away from an interview with Arnold. It was through his capture that the plot of treason was discovered. There were rumors of other plots; word had come to Washington that there were other generals in the American army as guilty as Arnold. And it was known to be part of Arnold's agreement and intention to carry with him into the British forces as many Americans, officers and soldiers, as he could. So there was bitter feeling against traitors of all kinds at the time Champe deserted.

Now you begin to see how much courage John Champe needed to desert. He wasn't a bit afraid to take a chance on getting out of the American camp, or making his way into the British lines in the city of New York. He was not at all anxious over the prospect of acting as a spy. He was perfectly willing to try to lay hold of Arnold in the midst of the enemy and drag him forth. None of those things bothered him a bit. But he was not pleased with the circumstance that he would be hated and loathed by his comrades. That was what bothered him.

It was indirectly because of Arnold that Champe deserted. There were three things that General

Washington wanted to do. He wanted to find out whether it was true that other American generals were as guilty as the one that had gone over to the British. He wanted to get hold of Arnold and abduct him into the American camp where he could be properly punished. And he wanted to save the life of André, whom every one liked and was sorry for, which he felt he could do if he could get hold of Arnold, who was the real villain in the case.

To accomplish these three things he realized he must send some brave and trustworthy fellow into New York. When he talked the scheme over privately with Major Lee—"Light Horse Harry" Lee, of the dragoons,—Lee said that Champe was just the man for it. Washington wrote a couple of letters to citizens in New York who could be relied upon, and gave them to Lee for Champe to take with him. Lee, returning to his tent, sent for Champe and laid the proposition before him.

John Champe was very reluctant about going, if he had to desert. It was only after Lee promised to clear his reputation with the soldiers if anything should happen to prevent his return, and had made him see that it was his duty to go, and that he would be doing a big thing for the American cause, that he consented. You see, the desertion had to have the appearance of being genuine. It wouldn't do to tell the rest of the soldiers why Champe had left them, for fear that word would get to the British and they would hang the brave fellow. There were spies in

camp, and in the country about ; much information leaked mysteriously from one side to the other, all the time.

Champe, prevailed upon at last, took the two letters and stuffed them into his breast pocket.

"When do you start?" asked Lee.

"To-night," replied Champe, pulling out his watch.

"Now." It was half-past ten.

Light Horse Harry looked pleased. "Good," he said.

"You will do what you can to prevent a pursuit," said Champe.

"It is not likely that your absence will be discovered until daylight," Lee returned. "If it is I shall do all in my power to detain a pursuing party, short of disclosing to them the secret of your desertion. Which way will you take?"

"Paulus Hook," Champe replied. Paulus Hook was a point on the west shore of the river occupied by a British fort; the same fort that Lee had descended upon and captured in the middle of the night a year before. "'Tisn't likely the boys will give me until morning to get away in," Champe went on. "I need all the time I can get. There are many patrols out, and the countryside is full of marauding and booty-hunting parties going to and fro that it would be awkward to meet. I shall have to do some dodging ; it won't be a straight ride down the middle of the road, sir."

"I shall have every care to give you a good start,"

Lee reassured him. "You have full instructions. Do not let either of the parties to whom you have letters let the other know that you are in communication with the other, and do not let the enemy find the papers upon your person. And do not fail to bear in mind that General Washington especially commands that the knave be brought back unharmed, so that he may suffer in the presence of the army."

Champe, nodding again, saluted, and turned from the tent without another word.

The night was a bit dark and threatening rain ; a lucky circumstance, thought Champe. As will be seen, it was a very unlucky one, and nearly brought disaster upon him. He sauntered across the camp to his own tent, gathered up his gripsack, cloak, orderly book, and sword, stepped out into the shadows, made his way silently, but without suspicious stealth, to the tether, picked out his horse, saddled and bridled, mounted, and rode away.

Major Lee was not entirely happy after Champe had gone. He got to thinking things over again ; he lay on his cot wide awake, worrying about the young soldier. He tried to hope that his absence would not be discovered until morning.

He knew that Champe had a long, hard ride before him. The American army was scattered through upper New Jersey and lower New York, west of the Hudson River. Champe must ride down among their many outposts along the neck of land between the

Hudson and the Hackensack and make his way to the British fort on Paulus. The country was full of scouting dragoons.

Champe had been gone scarcely half an hour when Captain Carnes came stirring up to his commanding officer's camp with an alarm. "One of the patrol challenged a dragoon who put spurs to his horse and fled," said the captain.

Lee, of course, knew perfectly well who the dragoon was; but he rolled over on the other side, yawned, and upbraided the captain for disturbing him. Captain Carnes repeated what he had said, with increasing excitement. Lee told him to go away; that he was fatigued by his ride to Washington's headquarters the day before, and wanted to rest. But Carnes persisted.

"Perhaps it was some countryman," Lee suggested.

"It was a dragoon of this army, and probably of this legion," the captain returned, stoutly. "The patrol saw enough of him to make sure of that."

The major started to discuss with him the improbability that any one should be riding away on mischief. No one had ever deserted from Lee's legion. "It is one of the men going out for a bit of private fun," he suggested.

But Carnes was not to be shaken. "I have ordered the legion to form, so that we can see who it is," he said. "Would it please you to make out an order for the apprehension of the rogue?" The

captain went off for an inspection of the force, leaving Lee trying to devise schemes for delaying the pursuit without making it apparent that he was a party to the desertion.

In a few minutes Carnes was back, boiling mad. He had found out who the scoundrel was ; it was Champe ! He was astonished and dismayed ; if Champe had proved traitor, who could be depended upon ? The fellow must be brought back and hideously punished.

Lee, pretending the utmost surprise, argued with the doughty captain. It was impossible that Champe was deserting, he said. He went on to point out the many things Champe had done in the past to prove his loyalty to the patriots' cause.

But he could not argue all night ; the time came when he was compelled, for the sake of appearances, to make out an order for the arrest of John Champe, alive, if possible, but in any case not to permit his escape. He gave the order to Cornet Middleton instead of Captain Carnes, partly because it made another delay to find Middleton and bring him up, and partly because he knew Middleton had a tenderer heart than Captain Carnes, and would be less likely to kill the brave sergeant. Of course Major Lee could have whispered to Captain Carnes or Cornet Middleton that Champe's desertion was authorized ; but the camps and the country were so filled with British spies that he did not want to do that, for fear the word would follow Champe to New York, and be

his undoing. . . . It was then past twelve ; Champe had been gone a little more than an hour.

Now it was that the clouded sky, which Sergeant-Major John Champe had welcomed when he started out, came near to being disastrous. For the squad of pursuers, with Middleton at their head, had scarcely more than left camp in a whirlwind of hoof-beats when a little shower came down from the clouds. Enough rain fell to beat out all old marks on the ground, and spread a new surface on the road. Presently the pursuers came upon the tracks of Champe's horse, clear as print in the new-laid dust. There could be no mistake about the tracks ; the horses of Lee's legions were shod with a shoe of a certain shape, with a peculiar mark in the toe of the shoe.

Champe, meanwhile, had been making the best of his way down the neck of land toward Paulus Hook. His progress had been slow. He had been obliged to dodge pickets constantly, and frequently was compelled to ride into the woods and wait while some wandering detachment of cavalry passed by in the road. He was quite certain that he would be followed closely ; it was nerve-racking to have to waste any time.

Morning was just breaking. Champe, riding down a little slope toward Bergen, was beginning to be relieved. He was now within striking distance of Paulus Hook ; his horse could make it in a long sprint, if need should be.

His trained ear caught the sound of hoof-beats behind him. He turned in his saddle. A group of horsemen was just coming into view above the ridge, not half a mile behind him. At sight of him, they put spurs to their horses, and came down the slope on a mad run.

There was little doubt who they were, and what their errand was. Champe urged his animal into a run, and tore toward Bergen.

Bergen lay midway between the North or Hudson River, and the Hackensack. One road ran eastward from the town to the Hudson and Paulus Hook, and another westward to the Hackensack. There was a bridge on the Paulus Hook road not far out of Bergen. A short cut ran through the woods from the main road he was on to the bridge, avoiding the town. To gain the bridge ahead of the pursuers would be to escape safely, but Champe did not dare risk a ride through the woods, because the cut-off was so much used by American cavalry, riding to and fro on their mischief. So he kept on into the town.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw the squad that was following divide at the point where the cut-off went to the bridge. Several horses raced off down the path, and the others came thundering onward toward the deserter.

What was to be done? Champe knew he would be cut off at the bridge; it would be impossible to get there ahead of the party that had taken the trail

through the woods. Unless he could get across that bridge he could not get to Paulus Hook. Unless he could get to Paulus Hook, he —

Four miles west of Bergen, Champe recalled, in the Hackensack River, he had seen some British galleys. If they were there now, and if he could reach them, he would be safe. He would give his pursuers the slip; they would look for him at the bridge. If the cursed shower had not made it so easy to track his horse, he thought, he would have a splendid chance to throw them off the trail.

He rode into Bergen, whisked around a corner, struck into the main street, where the tracks of his horse mingled with other tracks, followed the ruck as far as he could, came to the east and west road through town, turned to the right, and struck out into the open again, toward the Hackensack, and the British galleys,—if they were there.

There were a few anxious moments. His horse was tiring. If his old comrades lost track of him in the village he would be all right. How he wanted to shout out to them and tell them the truth, not because he was afraid they would kill him in the pursuit, as he knew they were quite likely to do, but because he could scarcely endure to be thought a traitor. . . . He saw them take the turn to the left, and hurry toward the bridge. He slackened his pace a trifle, to give his horse a chance to get its breath.

He had not gone far before he heard them follow-

ing again. Middleton, finding that Champe had given them the slip in the village, had sent his troopers scouring through the streets. Two of them had picked up the telltale marks in the fresh paste that the rain had made of the dust; had given the view halloo, and away they were, the whole pack of them, cursing through shut teeth at the traitor and deserter.

Champe, stretching his horse into a dead run, kept ahead. He caught sight of the masts of the British galleys through the trees, and he took cheer. As his horse tore along the road the sergeant managed to fasten his satchel to his shoulders, so that his arms would be free to swim. He drew his sword, throwing away his scabbard so that it would not get between his legs when he was in the water and hinder him.

His horse was rapidly growing tired; it was about ready to give in. The pursuers were gaining; they were not one hundred yards behind. The river was not far. Could he make it?

His horse staggered up to the swampy margin. Champe, throwing himself from the animal's back, plunged in, splashing the ooze over his uniform, shouting out to the galleys and calling for help.

The men on the galleys guessed what was going forward when they saw a man leap off his horse and plunge into the river, followed by a squad of hurrying horsemen. They opened fire on the pursuers, and sent out a boat. Champe, swimming strongly,

saw his comrades of the legion turn reluctantly from the shore and ride off, leading his animal among them. He fell into a slow stroke, swimming easily toward the approaching boat.

The story that he told when they had pulled him in and carried him aboard was easily believed. The pursuit, which had been full of threat at one time, had turned into a big piece of luck. Those who had witnessed the end of it from the galleys were in no doubt that it was genuine, and that Champe was, as he claimed to be, a deserter from Lee's legions.

He was conveyed to New York City, where he presently found himself, after a number of examinations, in the presence of Sir Henry Clinton, British commander-in-chief. Champe was just the man for what followed. He was not much of a talker; his face was one that hid his feelings; he was very wise, and very cautious. He told Sir Henry a great many amazing things about the American army, with just enough truth in them to make the Englishman think they were all true. Before he was through being examined, Sir Henry felt pretty certain that the entire American army was ready and waiting for a chance to come over into the British ranks.

"Gad!" cried Sir Henry, rubbing his hands. "'Twill not be long ere we shall have no enemy to fight. Here,"—to an orderly—"take this fine fellow to General Arnold, with my compliments. He will make a likely soldier in the legion for Virginia."

Arnold at the time was recruiting a force among deserted Americans and Tories for an invasion of Virginia.

Sir Henry, writing out a communication for General Arnold, handed it to the orderly, who beckoned Champe, and the two left for the traitor's headquarters.

John Champe's heart beat fast when he was led into the presence of the man who had endeavored to betray the patriot cause. He was not sure of himself; was not certain that he could keep his face free from the abiding hatred he had for Arnold; that he could conceal a desire to fall on him and do violence to him.

Arnold was sitting at a table in the parlor of the house where he was quartered, busy with papers. He looked up with a nervous glance when Champe entered with the orderly. He had the appearance of a man who was making a brave fight against his conscience.

He took Sir Henry's letter from the orderly, opened it, and read it in silence, without once glancing from it, until he was through. "So you also have come to your senses," he observed, casting a sidelong glance at Champe, at last.

Champe merely grunted, and nodded.

"You are a brave fellow to have the courage," Arnold remarked.

"It took courage," replied Champe.

"Many more will follow you," Arnold went on.

"Your example has had a great effect in the American army," said Champe.

Arnold was silent for a space. "You wish to enlist in my new legion, I assume," he said.

A flush of anger burned in Champe's honest cheeks. He pulled out his handkerchief and blew his nose to hide the telltale color from the traitor. But Arnold was not looking at him; his eyes for the most part were fixed on the table before him.

"I don't know that I want to enlist," Champe replied, controlling himself. "You see, if the Yankees should catch me in your ranks it would go hard with me."

"Tut, tut, my man! You're not one to be afraid, are you?" exclaimed the general.

"I wouldn't like to be hanged, sir."

"No danger of that. With a legion of brave fellows like yourself there is little chance that you will fall into the hands of the enemy. You were a sergeant-major with Mr. Lee?"

Champe boiled to hear his dashing commander deprived of his title, after the fashion of the British when they spoke of American officers, but he held his tongue. "I was," he said.

"So you shall be with me," Arnold promised.

Champe seemed to be taking thought.

"Take it under consideration," said Arnold, noticing his expression. "Meanwhile, you will lodge with my recruiting sergeants, next door to me. They are merry lads; you will find life pleasant

with them." The traitor arose from his chair and walked across the room to a bell cord.

Champe watched him with a strange mingling of sensations. Arnold walked with a limp, being hopelessly crippled in one leg from the wounds he had received at Quebec and Saratoga. The reminder of his former brave service in the American army collided in Champe's mind with the feelings aroused in him by seeing the traitor active in the midst of the enemy, setting up keen emotions.

An orderly came in response to Arnold's pull on the bell. "Take our friend Sergeant Champe and quarter him next door," Arnold directed, addressing the orderly. "Make him known to my recruiting sergeants. He is a brave lad that has lately come over from the enemy."

So far, fortune had favored the American in his risky undertaking. He had escaped suspicion, he had obtained the confidence of the man whom he sought to abduct, and he was to be quartered close at hand, where he could have excellent opportunity to form and execute plans for the carrying out of his purpose.

The recruiting sergeants received him with friendly good fellowship, and he proceeded at once to make himself at home with them. The first thing to be done was to communicate with the persons to whom he had letters. Of these two the first one to be seen was the one who was to obtain information concerning the other American generals who were

under suspicion. That matter must be cleared up before he could begin his other errand; he could not leave the city with Arnold until he had learned all he could.

For several days he had no chance to deliver the first letter. Although he was under no direct suspicion as yet, he had to be cautious in his conduct, because every stranger was more or less closely watched. He spent his time with the recruiting sergeants and the recruits, gossiping idly and spinning yarns, after the fashion of soldiers, and establishing himself as securely as possible in the good opinion of his comrades.

One night, fixing up some excuse, Champe left the house alone, and wandered through the streets of the city with the manner of one on a stroll. He had his letter hidden in the lining of his waistcoat. The other was concealed in a crack behind the wainscoting of his room. Loitering about until he had made certain that no one was spying upon him, he set off at last for the address on the letter.

He found the man he was looking for after some search, and presented the letter. The man read it twice, squinting closely between lines at the bearer, held the paper over a candle until it was a crinkled cinder when he had finished it the second time, and then extended his hand to the deserter. "I am glad to see you safely here," he said, leading him to a chair.

"I have no doubt that I can ascertain what General

Washington desires to learn," the man went on, when they were seated, "but it will take some time. We have to be extremely cautious; we hardly know whom to trust. I am reputed to be a staunch Loyalist. If the British should find out what I am doing, I should have short shrift. I shall have to have the help of a certain individual in the matter, and shall not be able to see him, perhaps, for several days. We are obliged to meet by chance in the street; and if we met too frequently we would attract attention. If you will walk down Cortland Street in the afternoon at three o'clock five days hence I may have word for you."

Champe, spending half an hour with his fellow-spy, returned to his quarters. He was impatient to be about the rest of his business. If Arnold was not delivered in the American camp soon it might be too late to save the life of André. But he was compelled to wait for this business to be transacted.

In the days that followed Champe watched Arnold like a hawk. He regretted at times that Washington had expressly ordered the traitor to be brought back alive. Every time he looked into the face of the man who had led a forlorn hope against the walls of Quebec, who had built a fleet in Lake Champlain and stood at bay against the British ships, who had pounded the British army to a jelly at Saratoga, and who had wrecked all his good deeds by his infamous treason; every time Sergeant-Major John Champe looked at the man and thought of these

things he wanted to lift his right arm in vengeance. Arnold had fought too well to be a traitor.

He met the man to whom the first letter had been addressed in the street some days later, as they had appointed to meet, and learned that the business was not yet completed. The other had gained much information, but not enough. It was a week later before he had finally established beyond doubt that the rumors involving other generals were wholly false. They had been spread by the British for the purpose of disturbing the Americans' peace of mind and breaking up their organization by introducing doubts. This Champe communicated to Major Lee, and went about the other errand. He had found it necessary meanwhile to enlist under the odious traitor. The step went hard with him, but it gave him a greater freedom of movement.

On a cool October evening John Champe slipped out of the house where he lived with the recruiting sergeants of Arnold's legion, crept along the walls of houses, came out in a main street, and swung swiftly off toward North River. Making many windings and turnings, with frequent sly glances over his shoulder, he turned at last into a narrow lane, pushed open the gate of a little cottage, marched up the gravel walk, and knocked at the door. The door was presently opened a little crack by a man who held a candle in the chink to see who it was knocking. The man held his foot against the bottom of the door to prevent its being pushed open from the

outside. One hand was held behind his back, in a manner that suggested a weapon.

"Does Mr. Jeremiah Hepworth, esquire, live here?" asked John Champe.

"He does," replied the other.

"I have a communication for him." Champe held out the second letter he had brought with him from General Washington.

The man, catching a glimpse of the handwriting, cast a second quick glance over the stranger, evidently fearful that some trick was being tried on him.

"I will hand it to him," said he.

"The matter requires an immediate reply," said Champe.

Hepworth, breaking the seal, began to unfold the letter, holding the door half open with his knee.

"The communication, sir, is for Master Hepworth alone," Champe reminded him, rather brusquely.

"I am he; I am he," the man reassured him, glancing hastily over the contents of the missive, while Champe studied his face closely. "Come in," he said, at last.

Without another word Champe followed him into the kitchen of the little cottage, making sure of the door before he left it.

Hepworth motioned him to a seat. "You are acquainted with the purport of this communication?" he asked.

John told him that he knew what it was about.

"It is a bold project," observed the cottager.

Champe nodded his head in agreement that it was.

"What do you purpose doing? How do you expect to effect the capture of this unutterable wretch?"

"That is what I am come to discuss with you," returned Champe, boldly, sweeping away all further preliminaries.

They drew their chairs close about the fireplace, for the night was a bit biting. Hepworth produced pipes and tobacco, and a mug of ale. "I'll help you," he said. "I'll do what I can; all I can. It is a risky business, mind you, to bring off this miscreant from the midst of his friends, and we must be cautious. What is there that I can do to help you? What is your plan?"

"Can you find me a couple of good stout watermen who can mind a boat and keep their own counsel?" said Champe, who had a fashion of coming at once to the point when nothing was to be gained by beating about it.

"I think I can; I think I can," replied Hepworth, thoughtfully, with an eye in the fire.

"They needn't know what is expected of them, except that they must be at a certain place on the river front on a certain night, ready to row us across to Hoboken."

"Good," said Jeremiah Hepworth. "Excellent. I have two such fellows in mind. They may be depended upon; they may be depended upon."

"I shall want some stout fellow to assist me in what I shall have to do," Champe went on.

"Might one of the boatmen do?" suggested Hepworth. "One of them is a capital fellow; strong as a bull, and zealous. You may depend upon him."

"I will take your word for him, sir," replied Champe.

"And what do you propose to do?" asked the other, for the third time, in a whisper.

Champe leaned closer to his fellow-conspirator. "Arnold comes home each night about midnight," he began. "He walks in the garden behind his house for an hour or two before he retires. He is always alone. . . ."

"Alone with the memory of his dastardly treachery," interposed Hepworth.

Champe proceeded without comment on the remark. "I am quartered in the house next to his. I have been compelled to enlist in his infamous service, so that I could be free to come and go, and not be sent about my business. I am a recruiting sergeant; I live with the other recruiting sergeants in that house. We also have a garden in the rear. The two gardens are separated from each other by a fence. Behind the two gardens is a narrow alley way. No one ever passes through it at night. My plan is to take off two or three of the fence palings, go into the garden at night when the villain is walking up and down, steal behind him, with a gag ready, seize him, smother his cries before he can raise an alarm, and carry him into the alley, where we can bind him and make him secure against any

outcry. That done, we can take him on our shoulders to the water-front, put him in the boat, and row to Hoboken. I shall notify Major Lee of the night when we expect to carry out the project, and he will be down at the water on the other side to meet us with a troop of dragoons. If we encounter any one on the way to the boat, we shall say that it is a drunken sailor whom we are carrying to his mates. We will select a dark night, and go through back lanes. I have already picked out a route to the water that we can safely follow, I think."

They talked the plan over at length, and parted at last with a promise of meeting the second day thereafter in a certain street, where they should greet each other like two old friends encountering by chance. In the meantime Mr. Hepworth was to see the two whom he hoped to engage in the enterprise, and broach the matter to them, with great caution. If possible, he would bring one of the two with him to their next meeting.

The day came. Champe, all impatience, for he could scarcely brook being constantly under the nose of Arnold without making progress toward his punishment, went to the appointed street and sauntered along the pavement, carelessly, looking in at this window and that like an idler with time to kill. Presently he caught sight of Hepworth, approaching from another direction in much the same fashion, accompanied by a strange young man. They encountered presently, greeted each other casually,

and stopped for a chat. Champe suggesting a mug of ale, they turned down the street, crossed a corner, and entered an inn, where they sat in idle gossip for upward of an hour, when they broke up to go about their business. All this to throw out of suspicion any one who might have looked askance at the meeting of a deserter with two citizens of the city.

Passing along the cross streets of the town in leaving the inn, they spoke of the subject in hand. They did not talk after the manner of conspirators in story books, with their heads close together and sly looks stealing over their shoulders. To any one who did not hear it their chatter would have appeared very light and frivolous ; but they took good care that none heard it. They flung jests back and forth, laughing and bantering one another, when they came within ear-shot of other passengers ; and did not change their manner, although they changed the subject of their discourse, when they were alone in the streets.

The third person, who was the one of whom Hepworth had spoken, was enthusiastic for the project. His ardor was a bit too keen ; he was for being about the business at once, without delay. But Champe was for waiting another week, until the moon was in the dark, when the way would be safer. He was supported in this by Hepworth, who had an older and cooler head on his shoulder than either of them. There was the less reason for haste now, because André, whom Champe had hoped to

save by Arnold's abduction, had confessed to being a spy and been hanged. The three separated at last, after arranging for future meetings, and went their several ways.

John Champe had no easy life now among the recruiting agents with whom he was quartered, next to Benedict Arnold's headquarters. He was used to their rough banter, having tasted much of it among the American soldiery; but it was a tax upon his patience and self-control to be compelled to sit about in idleness by the hour and listen to their talk of the accursed rebels, as they spoke of the Americans, without resenting it, and laying about him well. Not only was he compelled to listen to it, but he needs must contribute his share toward the abuse of his friends on the other side of the river, and the cause for which he had long been willing to lay down his life, and was now laying aside his honor.

At last the day was fixed. Champe and his companions had arranged the least detail. The boat was procured and held in readiness. A gag and cord for binding their prisoner were secreted on the premises next to Arnold's garden, where they could be found when wanted. Champe, by great adroitness, had succeeded in loosening some boards from the fence between the two gardens so that they could be removed hastily and quietly. A place of meeting was appointed between Champe and the one who was to help him. The third understood clearly where he was to be with the boat, and when.

Everything was arranged. No one had become suspicious of their designs, and everything promised success. Having brought things to such a pass, Champe sent a communication to Major Lee telling him on what night the attempt would be made, and asking him to be at the riverside with a troop of horse to receive them and their prisoner.

The night came. Major Lee, ordering up a small detachment of his dragoons, set out from camp in the evening and trotted leisurely toward the point where Champe had written him the boat would land. The men had no idea of what was going forward. They looked upon the expedition as part of their day's work, and nothing more; a scout along the British lines; an investigation of some report involving a loyal citizen in suspicion of being a Tory; a hunt for a bit of forage; a meeting with another general;—any one of a dozen errands might have brought them out.

They rode to the bank of the river, and stopped. Lee, dismounting, gazed long and minutely over the gray sheet of water for the little boat that was to bring the traitorous general, Arnold, and to restore Champe to honor and new fame among his comrades.

The boat did not come. From early evening until morning paled the east beyond the city, they waited, but it did not come. At last the major turned reluctantly and rode back to camp, wonder-

ing what had happened ; full of fears lest Champe's failure meant that his plot had been discovered and he had met an ignominious death.

Four days later he learned what had happened. On the very day before the two conspirators were to seize Arnold, that officer changed his headquarters to a house where he could more conveniently watch the embarkation of his troops for his expedition against Virginia. And on the same day he had ordered his legion, recruited largely among Americans that had deserted from the patriot army, or had become tired of warring against the king, to be sent aboard the transports. He was afraid they would change their minds again and desert his ranks when they found themselves about to be sent against their old friends.

So Champe's bravery and courage came to naught through a piece of bad luck. He was compelled to go with Arnold's force into Virginia, and did not find a chance to get across to his own lines for several months. When he came into his old camp—Lee had moved with his legion to fight in the South meanwhile,—his former comrades were surprised and angry to see him received with honor by their commander ; but they soon learned the story, and John Champe became the hero among them that he would have been all the time if they had known.



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CHAPTER XI

WADING TO VICTORY

THERE was a party in the old fort at Kaskaskia on the evening of July 4, 1778. The French inhabitants of the town were making merry at the invitation of the officers of the post. The noise of laughter filled the soft summer evening; the sound of the fiddle quavered through the parade ground; now and then a strain of it got as far as the end of the village street or the wilderness of wood that pressed close upon the outskirts of the place.

The French inhabitants were very happy,—for no particular reason, except that they were French, and were having a party. There were several reasons why they might have been unhappy. They lived a rough and lonely life on the very frontier of civilization, with only a few distant neighbors, excepting the Indians that lived far and near in the woods. They were cut off from the entire world, getting word only at rare intervals, and scarcely ever seeing any one who could bring them news of what was going on. They had no diversions or amusements, except what they provided for themselves in the way of a dance or a feast. And they were not even under the rule of the French king, but were subjects of England, which you would expect to be annoying

to Frenchmen. But they did not mind it in the least. They had been subjects to King George of England ever since the close of the French war, some twenty years ago, when France lost Canada ; Louis or George was all one to them, if only they could have their music, and their song and dance, and feasting, odd times.

They were having a dance this night, and were making the most of it. They were unusually happy, perhaps because they had just got over fearing an attack from the Americans, whom they dreaded very much. They had learned from the Indians that the American frontiersmen were men to be feared ; that they were rough barbarians, terrible in fight and cruel in victory. A rumor of an attack from the backwoodsmen had come to Kaskaskia a few weeks before. The British commander had recently left for Detroit when the rumor came, and the Frenchmen were tremendously disturbed by it. Rocheblave, the French commander left in charge, had sent a messenger asking that another Englishman be put in command. He was afraid that the French Creoles would not fight as hard under him as they ought to. He knew, as a matter of fact, that if they fought at all it would be to defend their own lives, and not for the purpose of defending the British post, which they were supposed to hold loyally.

But that fear had evaporated and vanished, and the officers of the fort had asked all the Creoles, and

the Indians who happened to be in town, to come over to the fort on this night and have a good time, to celebrate their relief from fear. Now the good time was at its height. Dancers swept across the floor, bright-eyed, laughing, chattering, clapping their hands, as jolly as a parcel of children. Brisk Creole girls and handsome young Frenchmen, soldiers in the fort, many of them, flashed up and down the room in lively measure, forgetful of everything but the moment's pleasure. Their elders who could not dance sat about the edge of the room beaming upon them. Officers of the fort stood in corners, nodding approval. Here and there an Indian, stolid, mute, impassive, sat on the floor with his back against the wall, watching calmly. Everything was life and gaiety ; there was no hint in the air of interruption.

When the dance was at its height one of the Indians lying on the floor chanced to turn his eyes toward the door that opened on the parade ground. They fell on a figure the sight of which stopped the blood in his veins, Indian though he was. Standing there like a statue, with arms folded, with a face of wood, dressed in leather hunting jacket and leggings, was a tall American ; a stranger ; a backwoodsman.

For an instant the Indian stared blankly at the intruder. In the next instant, leaping to his feet, he uttered the war-whoop of his tribe.

The frightful cry brought the joy to a sudden end.

The music ceased in the midst of a note ; women and girls screamed in utter terror ; men cried out, running this way and that in confusion.

The confusion was growing worse, when the stranger spoke. "Do not be disturbed," he said. "Go on with your dance. Only remember that you are dancing now under Virginia and not Great Britain."

They only stared at him, unable to comprehend.

"Dance on," he repeated. "Do not be alarmed. My soldiers have taken the fort, but it is not you they have come against. Your commandant is in my hands ; him will I deal with, but as for you—dance on."

There was still much doubt in the minds of the company whether the solitary intruder should be resisted, when the question was settled by the appearance at his back of a score or more of hardy looking fellows like himself, armed with rifles. Then the Creoles knew that the rumors they had heard before, and which had died out, were founded on truth, and that these were the same American backwoodsmen whom they had dreaded.

The man was George Rogers Clark. He was a frontiersman and Indian fighter who had left his home in Virginia and gone to Kentucky. When in Kentucky he decided that the British ought to be driven out of the towns they occupied in the territory that is now Indiana and Illinois. The British general Hamilton, stationed at Detroit, was con-

tinually sending out expeditions of Indians against the American settlers from the forts. Clark saw that as long as they were held by the British the Americans would be in danger of losing Kentucky.

He made up his mind to seize the towns—Kaskaskia and Cahokia in Illinois, Vincennes in Indiana on the Wabash River. He made a journey to Virginia to get men and means to undertake an expedition for the purpose. Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia, supported the plan with his approval and endorsement, but could give him no men. At the end of a long period in which he overcame many discouragements and obstacles, Clark found himself at the falls of the Ohio, where Louisville now is, with about one hundred and sixty picked backwoodsmen.

The task ahead of him was heavy. He knew that there were more French Creoles in each of the towns than he had men with him. He knew that the Indians were inclined to be friendly with the English, and would probably fight with the French against his tiny band. But he also knew that the French were not very partial to the English ; that they were fighting on that side because it seemed to them the safest thing to do. He believed that he could win them over to his side if he managed it right.

To do it he decided that he must surprise the town of Kaskaskia, give the Frenchmen a good fright, and then tell them that he was their friend. He believed that if he frightened them enough, they would be so relieved to find that he was not going to harm them

that they would come over to him. He knew that the Creoles were not as particular which side they fought on as the Americans and Englishmen, but that they would be quite likely to do what they believed would be best for themselves.

It was a hard march he had with his little band. There were no roads; there were not even trails. The usual route to Kaskaskia was by river, but Clark could not go by the rivers because of the danger that he would be seen and reported to the French, which would prevent his surprising them. So he was obliged to strike out across the country, through dense woods and over wide stretches of prairie.

For the first fifty miles the Americans had to tear a way through the underbrush and fallen timber. After that they came to more open country. They fell in presently with a party of hunters, who joined the expedition and became their guides. Even the hunters became lost once, and for a long time did not know which way to go.

The tiny army approached Kaskaskia on the evening of July 4th. Clark had captured a French hunter a day or two before, who told him that the garrison had been expecting an attack, but had forgotten their fears now. When the Americans arrived opposite the fort they found that a dance and jubilation were going forward, and learned from a family living on the bank of the river that the Creoles felt so secure that even the sentinels on the fort walls had left their posts to go to the dance.

Securing boats, Clark ferried his force across the stream, sent one-half to surround the town and prevent any from escaping, and entered the fort through a postern gate near the water, with the other half at his heels. He crept up to the hall where the fun was going on and entered, standing beside the door, as you have already learned, before he was finally seen by an Indian and the alarm given.

But the alarm was too late. The soldiers at his heels had already seized the fort and secured Rocheblave and the other French officers, while the second party had filled the streets of the town and kept in their houses the few people who were not at the dance, and who might have made trouble.

The results of his bold move met his expectations. The French were properly terrified. The next morning they came to him begging for their lives. He told them that he would be very easy with them if they would swear allegiance to the American Congress and refuse to fight for the English. They were glad enough to do this, and swore their new allegiance heartily. All but Rocheblave, and some of the officers, who were forthwith packed off to Virginia as prisoners of war.

Clark's task, however, had scarcely begun. He had gained a foothold in the territory, but there was much to be done if he were to keep it. He was surrounded by tribes of hostile Indians, many of whom had recently been on the war-path against the Americans. Hamilton, the Englishman, was at De-

troit, and could not be expected to leave the Americans alone. He had more resources than Clark ; more men and more stores ; and he was in closer touch with a base. Clark knew that he could not expect even to hear from Virginia for many months, to say nothing of receiving reinforcement or supplies. Cahokia and Vincennes still belonged to the British ; even if he took them he would not have men enough to hold them. The situation was desperate ; probably no one but George Rogers Clark would have been equal to it.

The first thing he did was to settle the Indian question. He invited the hostile tribes to meet him at Cahokia, which he seized from the French, much as he had taken Kaskaskia. They came. They were very sullen and ugly. One night one of the chiefs tried to break into Clark's house with a party of braves, and capture the American leader.

The chief and his braves were seized. Other chiefs came to beg for them. Clark sent them on their way with short words ; he would give them no promises. After they had gone, to show them that he was not afraid, he gave a party in the fort, and slept that night in a house in the town.

His show of bravery had its effect on the savages. In the morning, when they came to a council with him, they were very ready to listen to him. He told them that he would not at once kill the braves whom he had taken ; that he would let them have three days' start, and then he would follow and make war

on their tribes. He said that he intended to carry a war against them all. He wanted to do it. But if they desired peace, he would let them have it, provided they would be good Indians. If they did not behave themselves, he told them, he would bring men from the East, as many as the leaves in the trees, and would exterminate the redmen. He spoke in the fashion of the Indians, with picturesque eloquence. They were tremendously impressed, and when he had finished they begged him to be friendly ; a request to which he consented, with pretended reluctance, refusing to smoke the pipe of peace with them.

So far things had progressed favorably. He continued to have good fortune. Word came from Vincennes that the Creoles there were of a mind to fight with the Americans for a little while, now that the English seemed to be defeated. Clark sent an officer to take command of the place. He could not spare any men.

Now he had seized the towns he had come to take. The next thing was to hold them. Hundreds of miles from home, with no chance to get more men or supplies, perhaps within a year, with only a handful of men, surrounded by Indians who were full of hate, although they were full of fear ; supported by Creoles, as unreliable as the wind, he lay exposed to the attack of the English from Detroit, which he knew must come sooner or later. But he made a great show of security, talked big for the benefit of his wavering allies, and waited.

The blow fell first on Vincennes, two hundred and forty miles away, which Hamilton captured in the fall, moving upon the place from Detroit. The Creoles made practically no defense. There were only two or three Americans in the place at the time—the commandant whom Clark had sent, and some others that had gone with him. Having captured the place, Hamilton decided to wait until spring before he moved on to Kaskaskia and obliterated the daring American who had come into the country with such a ridiculously small force. The roads were almost impassable already, and were becoming worse. He knew that Clark would not elude him; that he could not get back to the settlements that fall, if he wanted to, and that he would stay in the Illinois towns in the hopes of being able to hold them. So he sat down in Vincennes and waited.

Meanwhile Clark's situation was becoming worse. The time for which his volunteers had enlisted expired, and he was able to prevail on only one hundred of them to remain with him. He could not stay in the country with such a small force, barely half of what he had brought, and he did not want to withdraw, knowing that the Creoles would pay no attention to their oaths, but would go back to the British as soon as Hamilton put in an appearance. He wanted to enlist some of the Creoles in his ranks, but did not wish to invite them for fear they would consider it a confession of weakness on his part. So he hit upon a trick. Telling them that they could

now take care of themselves, and would not need him and his men any longer, he pretended that he was going to march back to Virginia.

The Creoles did not relish the idea of facing Hamilton alone, after the manner in which they had deserted the British cause, and they prevailed upon Clark to stay, offering to enlist in his ranks if he would remain. That was what he wanted, and he consented, after making a show of a delay.

The winter passed without event. Early in February a French trapper, Vigo, came over from St. Louis. He had been captured the preceding autumn by Hamilton, and recently set at liberty. He told Clark that the English were planning to descend on Kaskaskia as soon as travel was possible; that Hamilton had a large force available which he could gather together and bring against the Americans.

Clark knew that he would have no chance on the defensive; that the British would so heavily outnumber him that they would sweep him out of the country. So he hit upon a daring plan; a plan that not many would have contemplated, and very few would have undertaken. He decided to attack first.

The venture was audacious. The English had a larger force than his, in a strong fort. They had provisions, ammunitions, drilled soldiers, cannon; everything to make their position secure. And the journey thither was frightful. There had been a heavy snowfall that winter, which had melted, flood-

ing the country. All the rivers were out of their banks. Travel seemed impossible.

But Clark was not to be daunted by that. Bringing his little band together, he told them what he intended to do, and started out to do it. They marched from Kaskaskia in the middle of February, 1779, with as little in the way of clothing and food as they could possibly get along with. They had horses, and carried with them tools, for building dugout canoes to ferry them across the rivers.

It was not like the march of an army. It was more like an expedition of schoolboys, out for a Saturday's tramp; like a party of hunters, off to the woods for two weeks with the deer. They were a jolly crowd, joking, singing, laughing, and cutting capers as they trudged across the trackless country. When their spirits began to lag; when the fun ran low, Clark would start some new jest going, and in-spirit the men again. He kept them lively. There was one drummer boy who was the clown of the party. When times grew dangerously dull, Clark would set him at his antics. So they traveled, marching across the water-soaked country by day, camping in what dry spot they could find at night, living on game brought in by their hunters.

When they came to the branches of the Little Wabash they found a solid river five miles wide, where there should have been two streams three miles apart. Clark set his men to building large dugout canoes. They cut down trees and hollowed

them out, tapering off the ends. Launching these, they filled them with their stores and ferried across the first branch of the river, making many trips to bring up the men, and the horses, which swam in the wake of the canoes.

On the farther bank Clark had first built a scaffolding, where the stores were placed, to keep them from getting wet, while the men and horses were being brought over. There was a wade of three miles to the other bank of the other branch. The canoes were dragged behind the splashing, floundering men, who sometimes were in water to their chins, and who were never entirely out of it. The ground was covered with a heavy growth of brush, and there were many trees. Sometimes they could get the canoes through only with the greatest difficulty.

Arriving at the near bank of the second stream, Clark built another scaffolding for a place of departure, and proceeded to ferry his army across the turbulent river. The entire crossing occupied three days, full of hard work and hardships. There was not a man in the force that had on a stitch of dry clothing. In fact, they had scarcely been dry since they left Kaskaskia ; but now all thought of avoiding water was given up. The men henceforth paid no more attention to it than so many ducks.

And so the journey went. It was two hundred and forty miles from Kaskaskia to Vincennes, and most of the way was under water. At least, so it

seemed to the wading troops. And as they approached Vincennes, the travel became worse. There were entire days when they scarcely set foot on dry ground. They camped where they could, on knolls and hillocks that arose above the surface of the water.

Ten days after they started, late in the afternoon, they came to the banks of the Embarras River. That is, they came to where the river was, but there were no banks. There was nothing but a wide lake, without so much as a hummock showing above it. To cross without canoes was impossible. Neither could they find a dry spot on which to camp until one man espied a little knoll in the dusk, where they all huddled through the night, wet, cold and hungry.

They could not find any game now, because the floods had driven it all away, and could not have killed it if they had found it, because they were too near Vincennes. Hamilton might hear their shots; they could hear his morning and evening guns.

In the morning they set out, wading down the flooded banks of the stream until they came to the Wabash River, which they must cross in order to finish the march on Vincennes, on the other side. Clark set his men to work building more dugouts.

They had now been without food for two days, and there was no chance to kill any game. The Creoles wanted to return to Kaskaskia. Clark did not prohibit their going, knowing they would not have the courage to undertake the trip alone; so he

let them fume and fuss over their hard lot. He did, however, permit his hunters to go out and look for game, being willing to take a chance on being heard at Vincennes.

While the hunters were gone his men captured five Frenchmen from Vincennes. The astonishment of the Frenchmen at seeing an army of frontiersmen making a sudden appearance in the midst of a flood-drowned country was tremendous. They told Clark that Hamilton and the English in Vincennes had not the slightest suspicion of his approach.

On top of this good news came the return of the hunters with a deer, which was rather completely devoured, you may imagine, by the one hundred and seventy men who fed on it. But each had enough to keep him active for a few more days, and the end of the journey seemed to be approaching swiftly now.

The soldiers crossed the river the next day in a rain-storm, leaving their horses behind them. Clark had hoped to be able to get to Vincennes that night, but he found, when he had crossed, that the entire farther shore of the river was covered with water. Only a few hillocks protruded above the surface.

As soon as his men were all on shore, Clark struck out in the lead of the dripping column. They waded three miles, taking their canoes with them. There were not enough boats to carry all the men; there were barely enough to transport the few things the force had brought with them. At the end of three

miles, they stopped and made camp on one of the hillocks that formed an island in the lake.

Many of the men were too weak and famished in the morning to continue the trip on foot. These were put in the canoes, and the others started, pulling the canoes through the brush when the paddlers could not longer propel them.

They traveled in this way all the morning. At noon they came to a place in the lake where the bushes disappeared from view beneath the surface of the flood. It was a forbidding place, with the appearance of being very deep. The men were in despair. To cross seemed impossible. Their French prisoners assured them that it would be quite impossible.

But Clark was not to be daunted. Standing on the edge of the expanse of water, looking across it in the direction of his goal, he suddenly took his powder pouch, poured some powder in his palm, smeared it over his face, uttered a war-whoop, and plunged in. The others, animated by his example, followed. He ordered those near him to commence one of their favorite songs. Soon the wild chant arose from the strange procession of men floundering and splashing through the lake, often with nothing but their heads showing above the water.

Presently one of the men felt a path under his feet, and followed it, the others taking after him. It led them to a sugar camp, deserted, a few miles from Vincennes. Here they lay down for the night.

It was the second night since their crossing the river ; they had hoped once to spend the first night in Vincennes.

The night added to their discouragement. The weather, which had been mild, turned bitterly cold. Their wet clothes froze to their bodies. They were starving ; many of them were already sick with weakness. Only Clark's incessant good cheer and courage kept up the spirits of the Creoles that night. Even so, if they could have gone away ; if there had been any place to go to, doubtless they would have gone.

But the morning was bright and sunny. Clark, arousing his men, delivered a stirring speech, and plunged into the water once more, without waiting for a reply to his words, but breaking stalwartly through the ice.

Before the third man had followed him, he turned and gave an order that twenty-five men should bring up the rear and shoot any one who refused to march. The order was met with a cheer ; the men leapt into the water after him when he resumed his march.

It was the hardest time of all. They had entered Horse Shoe Plains, which, for a distance of four miles, was a solid sheet of water, with nothing rising above the surface. They made for a dense woods on the other side. Midway across, the weak and famished began to give way. Those in the canoes took all they could aboard and hurried ashore with them, returning for other loads. Many were in great

danger of drowning, saving themselves only by clinging to the stronger.

All through this bitter time Clark trudged at their head, cheering his men in every possible way, joking them about their weakness, making fun of their discouragement, singing songs and telling rough frontier jokes.

When they reached the woods at last many were just able to pull themselves out of the water and fling down on the ground. The strong built fires, but the warmth did not revive those whom the cold water and exertion had rendered helpless. So those who were strong picked them up from the ground and ran them up and down until the exercise revived them.

While they were resting on this dry spot a canoe paddled by some Indian squaws was captured. It contained a half of a buffalo quarter, some tallow, and kettles. Broth was made at once, and given to those who were starving.

In the afternoon they set out again, rested and refreshed, crossing a narrow lake in their canoes and reaching a dense bit of woods, from which they could see the cabins of the town and the stockade of the fort, two miles away. Between them and the town were numerous sloughs, which were filled with wild duck. Some hunters on horseback were riding about among the sloughs. One of them was caught by a squad that Clark sent out. He told the Americans that Hamilton had no suspicion of the nearness

of an enemy, which was good news ; but that there were two hundred Indians just come to town, which was very bad news.

Clark knew that the English, together with the Indians and French in the town, outnumbered him about four to one. He began to puzzle over the problem of winning the town against such odds. If he should attack at once, surprising them, he would kill some of the citizens, without doubt, and some of the Indians, which would set them against him. His only hope was to make them neutral. How was it to be done ?

He decided at last to send a letter to the people of the town. The young man he had captured told him that the Creoles were rather lukewarm toward the English, and would not fight unless they had to, and that many of the Indians were quite friendly toward the Americans.

So Clark sent a letter to the townspeople by the young man he had captured in which he told them that all who were friendly to the Americans should keep to their houses, where they would not be molested, that all who were friendly to the king would go to the fort and fight like men, and that all who were found on the streets under arms would be treated as enemies.

Having sent off the letter, Clark waited for evening. His men busied themselves getting their weapons ready. The rifles had suffered heavily on the trip, having been banged about in the dugouts

and tumbled into the mud of their camping places. The powder, too, had to be dried. Luckily the day was bright and warm, and the work of preparation progressed. The men were in lively spirits at the end of their long journey, with the prize in sight.

At sundown the tiny force marched against the town. Clark had heard nothing from his letter, and had no idea of what reception he would get from the citizens.

He found that his scheme had worked perfectly. The Creoles of the town were so in fear of him and his men that they did not even dare tell Hamilton that the Americans were in the neighborhood. Many of the Indians and the French who were friendly to the English began to leave town. Hamilton, discovering the commotion among the cabins, sent out to learn what it was all about. His men had barely found out, and had not yet reported to him, when the Americans descended upon the town.

As they passed up the streets of the town, in two divisions, Creoles came cautiously out of their houses offering powder and ammunition. Many of them wanted to serve under Clark. One Indian chief offered to join the Americans with his tribe, but Clark would have none of him, merely asking that he remain neutral. Some of the Creoles, however, he accepted.

Hamilton was so surprised by the American advance that he could not believe it was true. He thought that the first rifle shots he heard were fired

by Indians who had been drinking too much. But he soon learned better, when a sharp, incessant crackle of rifle started up in the dusk.

The fire continued through the evening. Fort Vincennes was a strong stockade, armed with two cannon and two swivels in blockhouses. Against these weapons Clark's frontiersmen had only their rifles.

At one o'clock, when the moon went down, Clark threw up an intrenchment, and when day broke his men, sheltered from the fire of the enemy, began to pick off the British gunners, firing through the ports in the blockhouses. The British artillery was soon entirely silenced.

Seeing that the enemy had ceased firing, Clark sent a demand of surrender to Hamilton, to which Hamilton returned a proposal of a three days' truce. Clark refused to consider the proposition, and ordered the fighting to go on.

Before it commenced something happened which decided the fate of the fort. Nine Indians that had been out in a scalping party came back to the town and marched up the street, entirely ignorant of what was happening. They had not heard the firing, which had ceased when negotiations for surrender were under way, and were completely surprised when a party of Americans rushed out upon them and captured six of them, after killing three.

Clark saw his chance. Leading the captured six, who had been killing and scalping American settlers,

toward the fort, he deliberately had them tomahawked and thrown into the river, in the sight of their English allies. The spectacle at once discouraged the English in the fort, and their Indian friends. If this man Clark could kill half a dozen Indians with their English friends looking on, thought the Indians, there was not much to be gained by being friendly with the king's men. Likewise, the audacity of the act was a hint to the defenders of the fort, if they had not already guessed it, that they had a stubborn and determined foe to deal with.

That afternoon, after a little more show of fight, the British surrendered and the northwest was saved to the United States. It was the last blow that was necessary to shake that territory free from the grasp of England. There was a long, hard struggle before it became a safe place in which to live; but it was always a winning struggle, and there was not any dispute as to whom the land by rights belonged. And all because one man had had the vision and courage to strike the blow; to march into an untracked wilderness against a foe that outnumbered him by swarms, and wrest that wilderness from their grasp.

The next time you get your feet wet, think of the soldiers that marched through water for two hundred and forty miles, with little to eat, and whipped a foe that outnumbered them two to one. Think of George Rogers Clark. And think of Indiana, and Illinois, and Michigan, as they are now. History will not be so dull if you do.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST HOPE

EVERY boy, at various times in his life, wants to be something that he never becomes. Perhaps it is usually just as well that he doesn't; it was much better in the case of Francis Marion.

Francis Marion wanted to be a sailor. He was pretty sure for a little while that he was going to be a sailor—he went off to sea in a ship, feeling very jubilant. But he was shipwrecked, and came home draggled in person and in spirits, and gave up the sea forever.

If Francis Marion had become a real sailor, it is hard to say just what would have happened. It is quite certain that a great many things that did happen would never have occurred, which would have been a misfortune to you and me.

For if Francis Marion had been a sailor, he would not have been a soldier; and if he had not been a soldier, the British would have overrun South Carolina in 1780, and would have gotten such a hold on it that Greene would have had a very hard time dislodging them. It is quite probable that Greene could not have done it at all, in which case the War of Independence might have broken down at the

last moment, or the Southern colonies, at least, might have remained in the possession of England. If you will think it over for a minute, you can see what that would have meant to the other colonies, and to the United States.

But Marion was a soldier, so everything turned out right in the end.

Francis Marion was born in South Carolina in 1732 or 1733. He came from a French Huguenot family that had been driven out of France because they were not Catholics. By the time Francis was born the family had been in America long enough to have become thoroughly American.

He was a lively sort of lad, ready to fight for what he thought was right; and a good fighter he was, for all that he was rather small. He was one of those wiry specimens that know how to handle themselves. After he came back from his disastrous voyage he went off with the militia against the Indians, and helped to punish them very severely for liberties they had taken with the settlers.

There are letters written by him at the time which show that he was a tender-hearted young man, as well as a good fighter. He spoke of the sorrow he felt when it became necessary to destroy the homes and the standing crops of their savage enemies. He was deeply touched by the thought of the little Indians; how unhappy they would be when they came back and found their pretty homes burned down, and the corn fields where they played in the

shadows of the stalks all chopped to the ground and ruined.

When the colonies began to break away from the mother country, Marion was as hot as any one for liberty. He was one of the officers in Fort Sullivan at the time that Sergeant Jasper climbed over the wall to rescue the flag that had been shot away by Sir Peter Parker's British fleet. But it was later on that he did the things which proved so important to us who are living now. This story will tell you about one of those deeds.

Matters went from bad to worse in South Carolina as the war progressed. The British captured Charleston eventually, and swarmed over the entire state, burning the houses of patriots and killing and hanging right and left. There was no one to oppose them excepting a few bands of militia that made indifferent work of it, through lack of arms, number, and organization.

The colony was in a condition of despair. Colonel Tarleton rode up and down with his British cavalry, pillaging and murdering. Marion, who had done what he bravely could, was hunted through swamps and forests, more than once narrowly escaping from his pursuers, who would have made short work of him if they had captured him. No one could see any hope; any escape from the terrible oppression of the enemy.

Then Congress sent General Horatio Gates down with an army to drive out the redcoats, who were

led by General Cornwallis. Gates had recently had the good luck to be appointed to the command of the Northern army in time to finish the work that General Schuyler had begun—the capture of Burgoyne's army at Saratoga. People who did not understand the circumstances—and the people of the South did not understand—expected great things of Gates. Brave reports of his prowess drifted through the countryside, reviving the hopes of the despairing people. They began to take cheer; to wait until this hero from the North should have rid them of their foe.

But their hopes were vain. Cornwallis, marching out from Charleston, met the American army and whipped it horribly. Gates ran more than eighty miles without stopping. DeKalb was killed. The American army was scattered; it vanished like a mist. Great numbers of the patriot soldiers were captured; many were killed. Despair was deeper than before; the one hope of rescue was shattered.

This was the situation when Marion did the brave thing of which you are about to read; the first of many brave things that I should like to tell you about.

Marion had joined Gates with a small force when that general approached South Carolina with his army. Marion's band seemed to Gates to be a worthless rabble. They were a motley company of countrymen, mounted on such horses as they had, armed with such weapons as they could find.

Many of them carried fowling pieces, or swords made of old saws. They were few in number, without discipline or organization. They had nothing to recommend them to a commander but native courage and skill in woodcraft; qualities that such a commander as Gates was quite incapable of appreciating.

Neither did their leader inspire great confidence in a man who had such confidence in himself that he held his English adversary in contempt. Marion was a slight, dusky, sharp-visaged man of forty-eight, with a quick, black eye and an absence of the military bearing which was to Gates the sole sign of a soldier.

Gates did not want such an array about him. But he was a courteous man, reluctant to hurt the feelings of another. As a device to rid himself of the ridiculous band without affronting them, he sent Marion with his men on an expedition to burn all the rice planters' boats that lay between him and Charleston, to prevent the British from escaping, after he should have defeated them in the battle toward which he was hastening.

That is how it happened that Marion was not with Gates at the disaster which befell him near Camden. That is how it happened that he was spared to do what he afterward did, and save the state. That is how it happened that South Carolina did not go back to the English, perhaps, and that the United States is what it is to-day.

The little company of ragged militiamen, thirty in number, were busy in the sludge at the side of one of the numerous South Carolina rivers on a pleasant afternoon in August, 1780, destroying a couple of new boats belonging to a neighboring planter, when the planter himself came up in a state of high excitement.

"What in the world are you doing to my boats?" he demanded, mistaking the motley crowd for I know not what set of mischief-makers.

"Destroying them," Marion returned.

"What are you destroying them for?"

"Because we were ordered to do so by General Gates, of the Continental army. I am General Francis Marion."

"And why in the name of all that is good, bad, and indifferent did he tell you to destroy my boats?" pursued the irate planter.

"He ordered us to destroy all the boats between Camden and Charleston to prevent Cornwallis from getting away after the British army is whipped," replied Marion. Perhaps there was a bit of a twinkle in the corner of his eye as he said it. Doubtless Marion knew what manner of soldier Gates was.

"Whipped!" roared the planter. "Whipped! Why, Gates is so whipped that he took horse and is running yet! DeKalb is killed, and the army is scattered to the four winds of heaven—or such part of it as is not captured by the British. Fine talk, this, of whipping the British!"

Marion, stepping up to the man quickly, held a finger against his lips, warning silence. They were a short distance apart from the others, and had not been overheard. "Keep your counsel," he directed, sharply. "Don't you know, man, that if these soldiers hear what you have just told me they are likely to lose heart, and be hard to lead against the enemy?"

The little officer of partisans perceived the situation in an instant. With Gates's army destroyed, nothing stood between the British and the Carolinas but his own little band of thirty men. He knew that no thirty men, however brave, would have the courage to stand alone against an army if the knowledge of their position should come to them too suddenly. For his part, he was stout enough to keep hope and determination alive, but he feared for the others.

"This way," he signaled, leading the planter aside. "Tell me that once more."

The planter recounted the tale he had heard of the disaster to the American army at Camden, with many details, brought to him by a faithful negro who had in turn heard it at a neighboring plantation. "And mark you," the planter went on, "the Tories are gathering even now to make short work of you and your men. 'Twould be well for you to steal off into the swamps and hide like a fox, instead of busying yourself burning the boats of your friends."

Marion paid no heed to the warning. He had

been hunted before and was not to be frightened by the present prospects. "Which way has the enemy gone?" he asked.

"Why, which way should he go, when he can go whither he wills?" returned the other. "Some, the report goes, are on their way back to Charleston with prisoners, and others, I make no doubt, are hunting you and your ragamuffins. And let me tell you that it will go sufficiently hard with you if they find you, for they have no love toward you, these bloodthirsty Tories and redcoats."

Without a word, General Marion sang out an order to mount. His men, dropping their tasks, ran to their horses, scenting something afoot, and eager to be at livelier business than burning defenseless boats.

"'Tis well that you make good haste while you may," approved the planter, whose temper was somewhat cooled by the safety in which his boats now rested. "Lie close within the swamps for a day or two, and break up at the first chance, is my advice."

"Not a word of this to the men," Marion warned, limping off to his own mount. He was lame, having broken his leg the year before in leaping from a window to escape a company of friends who were carousing, and insisted upon his imbibing more than he should.

Something in the little general's manner and tone pricked the curiosity of the planter. "What do you mean, sir?" he asked, stalking behind him. "You

are not going to tell the men? You are not going to make your escape?"

"There is no escape from this except in death, or in victory," Marion returned, quietly.

"You don't mean that you intend to attack the entire British army, surely?"

"I mean that I intend to do what I can to save my country, sir," returned Marion, swinging into his saddle. "Follow me!" he shouted, waving an arm toward his troop.

With a shout and a clatter of hoofs they were off across the low fields by the riverside, leaving the astonished planter to stare after them in wonder.

In those days the road from Charleston to Camden was called the "war-path," because all the armies and detachments of troops that operated between the British base and the northern part of the state passed back and forth that way. The "war-path" crossed the Santee River, the most important stream between the two towns, at a place called Nelson's Ferry. It is no longer on the map.

All that part of the country was dotted with swamps and groves. The roads were not very good, being nothing more than tracks of animals and wagons through the mud and sand. But they were the only means of getting from one place to another, for all that, and defined the course of travel quite as strictly as railroads do now.

In one of these swamps, not far from Nelson's

Ferry, a small company of men was gathered together in the shelter of night and solitude. Some of them had muskets ; some of them had shotguns ; some of them had pistols ; some of them had swords roughly made from old saws. They were all provided with horses ; their animals browsed quietly on the rank grass of the little patch of wooded meadow which the men had found in the heart of the swamp.

It was the night after Marion had heard that the American army under Gates was defeated. And these men hidden in the swamp were Marion's men. But if you think that they were hiding to keep away from the British, you will presently find out how mistaken you are.

They were very quiet, talking scarcely above a whisper. That was their way ; to steal by long marches close to an enemy, and to lie in wait until the time was ripe for striking. They did not know who there was near at hand to be struck this night, but they knew that their leader had brought them on one of their loved errands, and they were ready to do his bidding.

As they crouched in a silent group in the heart of the swamp, making a scant meal of cold potatoes and water, there was a sound of hoof-beats, and a horseman rode cautiously into their midst. He sought out Marion.

"What do you learn?" asked the little leader.

"There are a lot of prisoners from the fight up

yonder, being taken to Charleston by the British," was the answer. "They have just crossed the ford, going down."

"How many prisoners?"

"Between two and three hundred."

"And the guard?"

"About ninety."

"To your mounts, men, and follow me," cried Marion.

They were up and in saddle like a swarm of flies.

Ten minutes later the cavalcade emerged on the "war-path," and turned off in the direction of Nelson's Ferry, whither the British prison guard had preceded them.

A ride of a few miles brought them to the ferry. The fight at Camden had unsettled the country thereabouts. The road was filled with straggling parties, going to and fro, all of them of British sympathies; for it was no place then for a patriotic American. The keepers of the ferry had been so busy carrying people back and forth that they had got into the way of paying little heed to those they took into their boat, believing, of course, that all were Tories.

Riding boldly down to the water, prepared to seize the boats if necessary, but hoping to play some trick on the unsuspecting ferrymen, Marion asked that he and his party be set across the river.

"That I'll do, and right smart about it," replied the ferryman, whom large profits had put in good humor.

Horses and men went aboard, the boat cast off, and drifted slowly over the stream.

"Out to see what you can find?" queried the ferryman in charge, sidling up to Marion.

Marion nodded.

"Right smart fight up yonder yesterday," the waterman went on.

"So it seems," replied the little cavalier.

"Just took over a party of Yankee prisoners, looking pretty glum and bad beat up," he pursued.

"Just now?" rejoined Marion.

"Some hours back. About sundown. Reckon they stopped yonder at the Blue House."

"What is the Blue House?"

"What parts be you from, stranger, that you don't know the Blue House?" quizzed the yokel. "It's an inn, of course."

"I'm from another part of the state," replied the American.

The ferryman's curiosity was prevented from further satisfaction by the arrival of the boat at the farther shore, where Marion lost no time in debarking his men and setting out upon the road once more.

Their situation was not the pleasantest in the world. They were thirty men in the heart of a country overrun by a victorious army. Upon their devoted shoulders rested the burden of liberty. To sink under it meant death at the hands of a relentless enemy; for the Tories, and Tarleton himself, the

British cavalry officer, did not hesitate to hang the enemies of their king.

Swiftly through the black night they rode, a dusky cavalcade. Every foot of the ground was well known to them. Coming at last to a point not far from the Blue House, they swept off from the "war-path" and swung into the depths of the wooded swamp, where they stopped to rest while scouts went off to see how the land lay.

Some of them kept watch while others lay down on the grass to snatch a bit of sleep under the starry August night. Marion himself sat on a log, waiting, watching for the return of his scouts.

Presently they came.

"What news?" he asked, quietly.

"The officers are roistering in the house," replied the scout. "The men are scattered about in the yard."

"Is there any watch being kept?"

"A few idle sentinels. They think there is no enemy within miles of them."

Marion went back to his log, and waited.

The hours of early morning wheeled among the stars. An hour before daybreak Marion roused his men. "Men," he said, "are you ready to strike another telling blow for your country?"

"Aye, that we are!" from thirty tongues.

"Ninety of the enemy lie sleeping in yonder tavern. We are only thirty, but thirty tried men like you can make short work of them. Your country looks to you. Up, then, and at them."

He made a sign to Colonel Horry, his chief lieutenant. "Take a few men with you and make a wide circle to come in behind the house. Get as close as you can, and wait until we strike. Then close up on them, and see that no man escapes you. We must make clean work of them."

With the eagerness of a schoolboy starting a game of ball, Horry gathered a dozen stalwart militiamen to his side, and set off on the flank movement. The others watched them creeping silently through the night. They left their horses behind them in order to move more quietly and not be hindered by the animals when the final moment should arrive.

Marion turned to the followers that remained. "Look well to your guns, men," he ordered.

There was a muffled rattling of ramrods in muzzles, the clicking of locks, tried to see that they were in order, and a chorus of, "Ready, sir!" from the shadowy ranks.

"Forward, then, and follow me," said Marion. "See to it that you make no noise about it. Not a word between you. Watch where I lead, and come after. Do not fire without my signal."

Like a pack of Indians they crept through the swamp in the direction of the Blue House. Now and then the light from the stars twinkled on polished gun barrel; now and then a gleam of starlight came back from the straining eyes of the men, alight with excitement, eager for sight of the foe. They cared little if there were ninety against them—

three to one. They had been at such odds before, and were ready to undertake the fight again.

Through the hush of the early morning came the distant sound of men at revelry. The British officers in the house were making very merry over the defeat of Horatio Gates and his crew.

The sound stiffened the backs of the creeping assailants. You have seen a cat stealing up on a bird? There was the same tense excitement among the tiny band that moved against their bitter enemy.

Now they caught a glimpse of a light between the trees. They crept more cautiously, testing every spot of ground before they rested foot on it, careful not to break a twig or to rustle the dried grass. To make sure of success they must come unawares upon the enemy.

The trees opened out into a vacant space. They came to the road. They could see the house hulking against the gray sky. Lights gleamed from the lower windows. Shadows of men within were against the panes. In the yard the tiny force beheld the forms of their enemy, lying about on the ground, with here and there one standing watch above their slumbers. It was a strange scene of unsuspecting joy within and complacent peace without. Marion halted his men with a sign of the hand for a last rest before the fray.

A shot rang out on the night air from the other side of the house. Marion, whose mind was always

quick to understand, knew that Horry had blundered too close and had been seen by a sentinel.

Not a moment was to be lost. The alarm was given ; in another instant the foe would be prepared for the assault.

“Forward !” cried the little leader, leaping across the road, with his sword swishing the air above his head. “On, brave men !”

With a mighty yell of triumph the men came after, swarming across the narrow space that separated them from their foe.

British soldiers, aroused from peaceful sleep, scrambled to their feet and gazed about them, bewildered. Officers came tumbling out of the house with shouts and curses. A wild tumult arose from the yard around the inn. None knew what had befallen ; none knew which way to face against the sudden blow that had descended on them.

In from the road ran the Americans, shouting and firing as they came. Where a group of British soldiers stood hesitating, they dashed savagely, striking with sword and musket-butt, gashing with gleaming knives. Here and there some stood bravely upon resistance, until they were cut down or driven back. Others ran hither and thither, like chickens in a yard when a six-year-old plies them with a stick. The officers, with drawn swords, ran up and down, trying to bring some order out of the chaos, but not knowing where to turn.

The Americans seemed more like a host than like

thirty men. Marion was everywhere among them, shouting encouragement and directing attacks toward the more stubborn points of resistance.

The fight was over almost as soon as it had begun. The British, wholly at a loss, made only a weak and scattered defense. In the midst of the tumult arose cries for quarter; the enemy was surrendering on all sides.

Another moment, and Marion, pressing close to the front door of the Blue House, presented a sword at the breast of a British officer there.

"Surrender!" he demanded.

Up went the Englishman's arms. "I am your prisoner, sir," he said. "Cease firing!" he called to his men.

The order was not needed. Not one of the British soldiers was making a fight of it any longer.

"Where is your commanding officer?" demanded Marion.

They looked about for him. He was nowhere to be seen. They searched high and low. At last they found him high up the throat of the great chimney, whence they pulled him out by the leg.

That was the end of it—and the beginning.

Many were the long night marches, the sudden descents on unprepared enemies, before the tale was told. Many were the hidings in swamps, the furtive lurkings in back country, with rapid strokes made at great risk when they could be made, before the countrymen took heart again and came back to the

struggle. It was a long, hard struggle, ending only when General Greene came with another Continental army and defeated the English in several battles, driving them back to the narrow strip of coast about Charleston.

But that night was the beginning of it. If Marion had failed the cause then; if he had not led his thirty men, his forlorn hope, against the enemy in the very hour of the Americans' utter defeat, perhaps the dying struggle would never have been revived, and many things would have been different through the years that have followed.

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